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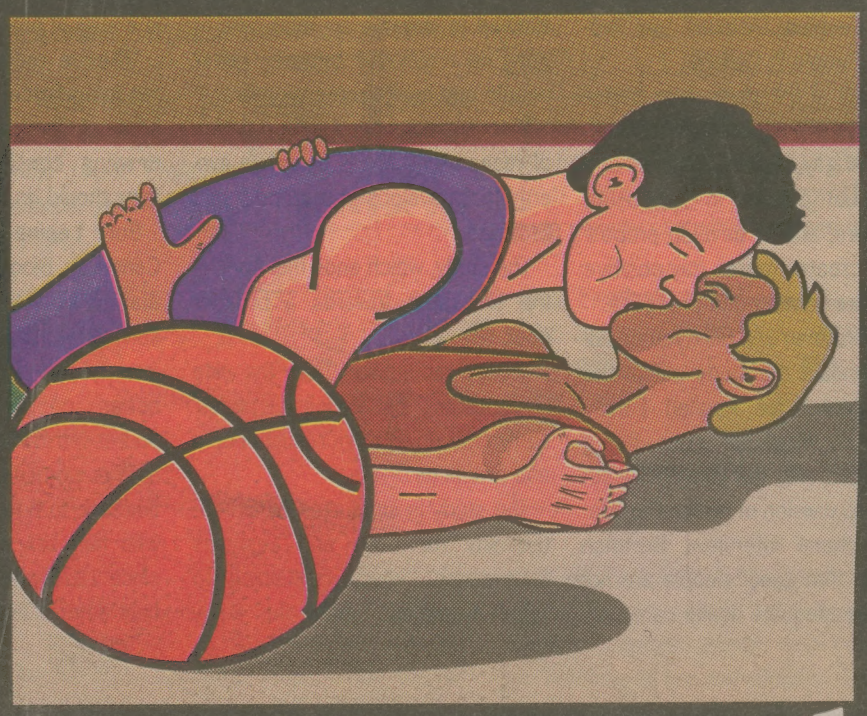

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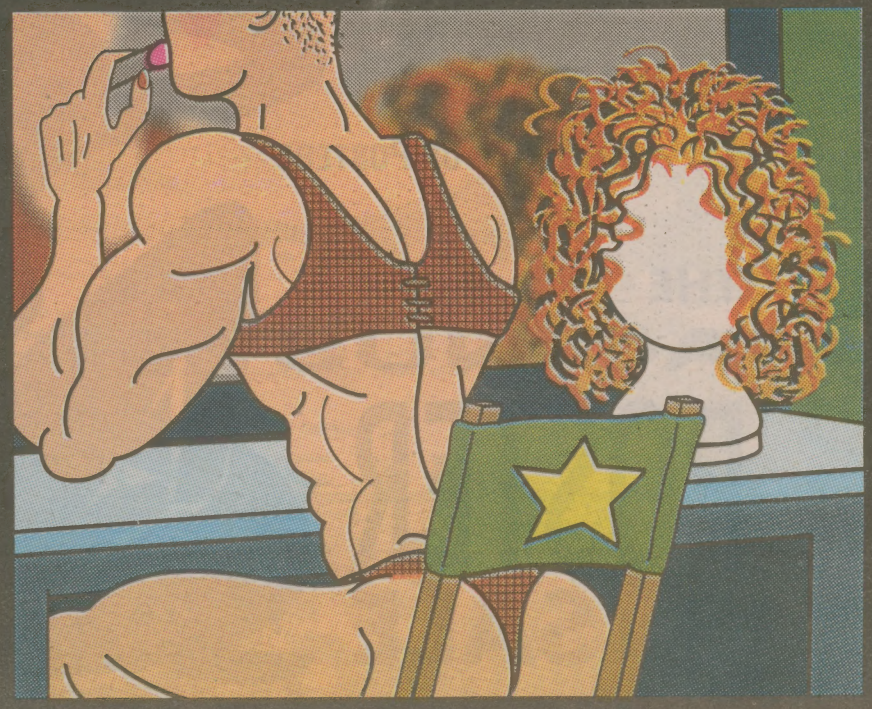

Cover by Steve MacIsaac

Study on queer health first of its kind

BY JEFF LIBBY

McGill University researchers are working on the first Canada-wide queer health care study, with hopes of improving care for gay, lesbian, bisexual and two-spirited people.

Victoria is one of six Canadian cities where queer people will be participating in focus groups for a study called Access to Care: Exploring the Health and Well-Being of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Two-Spirited People in Canada.

The goal of the study is to better understand the experiences and difficulties of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual people in accessing health care, and to develop proposals to create more gay-positive health care training and practices.

Shari Brotman and Bill Ryan decided to conduct the study out of the McGill Centre for Applied Family Studies in Montreal after being approached with the idea by Health Systems,a division of Health Canada.

In a phone interview, Brotman stressed that queer people are not receiving adequate health care.

"Particularly in health and health care, we've historically pathologized queer people," said Brotman.

"We've basically told them that being gay is a sickness. When you hear that enough, you won't want to go to your health care practitioner. If there is homophobia and heterosexism in health care systems, we must eradicate that."

Particularly in health and health care, we've historically pathologized queer people

The focus group discussions are allowed to develop on their own to open up a dialogue between queer people and health professionals.

"Focus groups are a different type of research. There is a certain synergy that develops in a group," said Brotman.

The study, which ends this April, is the first step towards a broader goal, she adds.

"Policy recognition from the elite is important, but it doesn't necessarily filter down to individual people and practices."

The study is supported by EGALE (Equality for Gays and Lesbians Everywhere), which is helping to raise awareness about the study and the focus groups. John Fisher, executive director of EGALE, says that his organization is very interested in what the participants of the focus groups have to say.

"We have concerns about the particular needs of gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in health care," said Fisher. "These groups enable them to share their own health care needs, the positive experiences they've had, and to raise awareness among health care workers."

Ayla Lepine, a member of UVic's Pride Collective, feels that the dialogue of the focus group meetings is a sign of progress.

"They've recognized the increasing importance in consulting members of the queer community in drawing conclusions about what they should do," she said.

But Lepine points out that Canadian Blood Services policies that consider the sexuality of a person rather than their high-risk behaviour is an outstanding issue for queer people that won't be addressed by this study. Currently, men or women who admit in a questionnaire to having slept with a man who had sex with a man anytime since 1976 are placed on a permanent deferral list.

Same sex spouse fights for pension compensation

BY TASHA MARSDEN

Beverly Holmwood (left) and partner Shirley Petten at their 20th anniversary celebration.

photo provided

"Well Hon, I gotta go save lives," Beverly Holmwood used to say to her partner every morning as she headed out the door for her nursing job at the Royal Jubilee Hospital.

When Bev was pricked with a needle on the job, she told her co-worker she was "too busy saving lives" to sit down and fill out an incident report.

Beverly Holmwood passed on Dec. 9, 1991 due to Hepatitis complications, and when Shirley Petten, her partner of 20 years, filed for pension benefits, she was denied. Thus began a seven-year battle over Bev's good word and the rights to her pension benefits.

"All I wanted them to do was recognize she had a work-related injury," said Petten.

In August 1992, the Worker's Compensation Board recognized the injury, but denied Petten's claim for a widow's pension. The hospital then appealed to the review board, claiming that since Holmwood had not filled out an incident report, the injury couldn't have happened at their hospital.

Petten said that even though the cause of death wasn't what was appealed by the hospital, it was what she ended up debating in the courtroom.

"I think they probably felt their case was pretty weak so they went for something else."

By November of that year, Petten became the first person in Canada to receive same sex spousal benefits from WCB. At the time, she questioned the lack of support from other lesbian and gay persons.

"I felt this was a really important step," said Petten. "I felt rather abandoned by my own community back in 1992."

Almost six years later, the Worker's compensation review board ruled in favour of the hospital and Petten lost her pension. She immediately appealed the decision.

"As long as they questioned Beverly Holmwood's abilities or said anything against her, I just wasn't going to let it go."

Petten decided to represent herself, after a Vancouver lawyer decided not to represent her.

By Nov. 22 of last year, the appeal division of the Worker's Compensation Board ruled that Bev died as a result of a work-related injury.

"Getting the pension back was certainly icing on the cake," said Petten. "But my big thing was that the [Worker's Compensation Board] questioned Bev's ability as a nurse."

Petten said that after seven years, the board had come to the same conclusion that the adjudicator had in the first place. Petten said she doubts whether she would have ever had to endure such a long legal battle if she was in a heterosexual relationship.

"It's only because of what I've gone through for the past seven years that I've felt this has nothing to do with whether Bev had a needle stick injury," said Petten. "And has everything to do with our sexuality."

When the Worker's Compensation Board was contacted about the issue by *the Martlet*, Shirley Petten's name was on file but there was no accompanying claim number or information other than "pension persons" so the WCB denied comment.

Shirley is now focusing on improving her health, something which she feels has been affected from the repeated stress from the case.

"I just won one battle. I'm going to have to think positive and win another."

The Royal Jubilee Hospital didn't return calls by press time. Representatives from the B.C. nurse's union also refused to comment on the case.

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Sinister Wisdom puts lesbians first

BY MARNI FRIESEN

An influential, lesbian-centred literary journal inspired the name of Sinister Wisdom, a popular women's studies course at UVic.

Like the publication from which it takes its name, the course delves into issues of lesbian identities, theory, culture and history. It's the only class on campus that puts a lesbian identity first, providing dykes with a rare scholastic venue for discussion of their experiences.

"Most departments assume that heterosexuality is the norm," said Debby Yaffe, who has taught the course in the past. Sinister Wisdom reverses the status quo by celebrating the lesbian community, its diversity and its contributions to society.

The development of a specific lesbian curriculum was a lifelong dream of the late women's studies professor Michèle Pujol. She first developed the groundbreaking course in 1994 with colleagues Barbara Herrenger and Debby Yaffe, and in doing so filled a significant gap in the women's studies program.

In the years since its development, the course has evolved and changed with the perspectives of each instructor and each group of students.

Early sections of the course focused on identity politics. Yaffe describes her teaching style as a "street level" one, which she says often provoked heated debates over personal political approaches and beliefs.

Connie Carter, who taught the most recent section of Sinister Wisdom, tried a more theoretical look at the course material, which involved both validating the lesbian experience, and emphasizing the deconstruction of all sexual identities.

However, theory doesn't necessarily diffuse class discussions. The issues covered in the class are personal, topical and controversial, said Carter.

Because students aren't able to discuss lesbian issues in other classes, many people are eager to speak out in this one.

As you might imagine, Sinister Wisdom is an extremely interactive class – more like a discussion group than a lecture course. "I don't think students walked away from the class with very many notes," said Carter, laughing.

Instead, students analyzed selected readings by lesbians, engaged in debates about the cultural construction of gender identities, and created some very relevant and thought-provoking class projects. The provocative display in the SUB this fall — a tall black board featuring photos and descriptions of lesbians of diverse backgrounds, and room for viewer comments — certainly achieved its objective of "increasing the visibility and/or safety of lesbians, dykes, bisexual, transgendered identities on campus."

Other projects included a resource booklet for gay youth, a "coming out day" campaign, and pieces of poetry and writing.

Sinister Wisdom is a class for straight-identified students as well as for lesbians. In fact, in at least one class, non-lesbians outnumbered the dykes.

Sinister Wisdom reverses the status quo by celebrating the lesbian community, its diversity and its contribution to society.

The student lesbian visibility project from the Sinister Wisdom class was displayed in the Student Union Buildng.

Martlet photo by Christina Harris

These students learn to look at the world through the eyes of a marginalized group, which is always a valuable experience. They can also learn more about their own sexual identities.

"The set of tools used [in Sinister Wisdom] to look at the history of lesbian identities can also be used to look at the history of heterosexuality," said Carter.

The scholarly field of queer studies is rapidly growing. Sinister Wisdom is the only course at UVic that focuses specifically on lesbian culture, but other departments are now offering related courses: lesbian literature is being taught in the English department, and both the history and sociology departments offer courses in human sexuality.

Queer studies departments are emerging at York and Guelph Universities in Ontario. These developments attest to the hard work and endurance of lesbian, gay and bisexual activists and scholars, who have opened the academic gates for new generations of students.

UVic student says residence not safe for queers

BY PATTI EDGAR

The sign on Ayla Lepine's door in UVic residence read "You're a queer and you don't belong here so go home."

That was last semester. In January, Lepine moved off campus. She said there was so much homophobia in her residence building that at times she was afraid she'd be physically hurt.

"Residence has a bit of a reputation for being juvenile, but I had a single room and I wasn't going to worry about it," said Lepine, who decided to be open about her sexual preference before she moved in.

"From the get go it was a really chilly climate. I'd hear people say 'that's the queer girl.' I would have things up on my door and people would yell things."

While UVic staff agree there are homophobic students in campus residences and say they are working towards making on-campus housing more queer-friendly, Lepine said not enough is being done.

When she brought her concerns to residence advisors their response was superficial, she said. Campus Security could only file an incident report. And although Steve Fitterer, housing and student affairs manager, seemed genuinely concerned about her problems, Lepine said she doesn't feel anything was done to make her living situation more bearable.

"If this was an issue of racism, those people would be identified and instantly expelled. Since it's an instance of homophobia, they seem more hesitant to do something about it."

Fitterer wouldn't comment on Lepine's case. However, he said residence staff are trying to eliminate homophobia by raising awareness among students and residence advisors.

"I wish I could say [residence] was 100 per cent safe for everybody," said Fitterer. "But when you have 1,600 students together you have situations that come up...[Lepine] is one person who felt strong enough inside to come forward. I'd be a fool to think there weren't others."

In August, the university's 53 residence advisors took part in two information sessions – one organized by members of the Pride Collective (UVic's student queer advocacy group) and a longer session on diversity by UVic's anti-harassment officer. Housing services also co-sponsored an anti-homophobia play called *My Dick* in the fall.

Residence life co-ordinator Liisa Gibson said she keeps in contact with the Pride office throughout the year to make sure residence activities are inclusive to queer students.

Story continued on Page 4...

on the spot

BY DARIAN KOVAKS

How can the University of Victoria make itself a more safe and welcoming place for queers?

Matt Shane
1st year visual arts

"UVic could have more meetings for people who have just come out of the closet, so people know that they're not alone."

Dave Abercrombie
1st year business

"They [queers] should have a group time for encouragement and camaraderie."

Anna Johnston
3rd year English

"UVic should provide a gay lounge and have buildings painted in rainbow colours."

Damian Carriere
1st year general studies

"By educating people on the matter. Otherwise UVic is pretty safe and welcoming as compared to other places."

Bob Loft
2nd year visual arts

"They should have picnics and garden gnomes celebrating the homosexual culture at UVic."

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Victoria's transgendered need more resources

BY TASHA MARSDEN

For most students who want to find out more about their sexuality, there are lots community resources to consult.

But for those with gender dysphoria — confusion or discomfort about their birth gender — the struggle to find information can be a frustrating one.

"One of the problems for transsexuals and transgendered, universally, is that there is a major lack of resources," said Ingrid Olson of the local support group Transcend. "In Victoria, there were only a couple doctors and psychologists seeing clients or patients."

Olson started the Victoria chapter of a Vancouver-based transsexual support group called the Zenith Foundation three years ago. Since then, she has helped bring together both male-to-female people and female-to-male people to address the common issues between them.

Funding for the group is limited. Meetings are held at AIDS Vancouver Island or the Capital Regional District, the board of directors works on a volunteer basis, and members are hoping for a small grant to create an information pamphlet and establish a resource library.

While Transcend mainly provides support, some members have done political advocacy work outside of the organization. Olson talks with nursing students, street youth workers and members of AIDS Vancouver Island. She will be speaking to social workers at Camosun College, and she would like to speak in high schools, or at least like to speak to high school counselors.

Gail Owen, provincial director for the Canadian Task Force on Transgendered Law Reform, is also an advocate for transgendered and transsexual people.

Owen is in the courts frequently, monitoring human rights cases. She also shows up on worksites to conduct sensitivity training when workers out themselves. She's helped workers in many prominent unions, but she keeps the information about who she's worked with confidential.

"They're out to their co-workers and family, but not to the world."

Owen, herself, is not afraid of being a public figure in order to bring attention to issues.

Transgendered persons are an important minority in our society which are not protected directly by human rights legislation

She is currently fighting a legal battle to have her passport indicate her sex as female. Although Owen's credit cards and other identification indicate that she is a woman, her passport can't be changed unless she has sexual reassignment surgery.

"I've received about a thousand e-mails from the transgendered community across Canada, in support of what I'm doing and how it is affecting their lives as well."

Day-to-day issues, such as using the washroom, also concern Owen.

"I'm not out there as a predator," said Owen. "I'm out to use the bathroom."

Owen has been bringing her experience into David Turner's classroom. He teaches a UVic course on human rights and the law to students in social work and child and youth care.

Turner is also an advocate for the Human Rights Coalition in Victoria, which addresses gender, race and human rights violations.

"[Transgendered persons] are an important minority in our society which are not protected directly by human rights legislation," said Turner.

He said the current government is not committed to funding for transitioning, and transgendered people have been the most "vociferous" at pointing out the gaps of the human rights legislation.

Olson's group, Transcend, has been campaigning to have violence against transgendered persons labeled as a hate crime within human rights legislation.

"Violence against transsexuals is never a stab wound or a gun shot, it is 20, 30, 40 stab wounds, gun shots, or being beaten to a pulp."

Transgendered persons are not only isolated from mainstream society, but also from homosexual, said Olson.

"That's always been a source of contradiction for transgendered persons – being shunned or excluded by the queer community."

Turner said that how society views gender roles can lead to problems.

"If we're going to treat people as equals, we have to be aware of those assumptions."

Nevertheless, Olson feels she is part of the mainstream society.

"I'm going to work, wearing my business suit, that mundane 9 to 5 life."

Sexual Reassignment Resources

The Medical Services Plan of B.C. covers the removal of the breasts, ovaries and uterus in a female. For males having sexual reassignment as females, the plan pays for the removal of the penis and the testes, as well as the creation of a vagina.

According to Janet vanClavern, B.C.'s secretariat to the gender reassignment surgical review committee, the criteria for coverage is based on the Clark Institute in Toronto, Canada's first gender dysphoria centre.

First, clients must complete an assessment by an approved clinic (the Clark Institute or one in Vancouver). The clinic makes a recommendation for a specific surgical procedures, and confirms the client is emotionally stable and has had two years of full societal integration as a transgendered person.

Holly Devor, a UVic sociology professor specializing in transgendered issues, is also a member of an international committee in charge of revising these standards every few years.

"I personally think they are reasonable guidelines, in need of some revisions," said Devor.

She said that no law requires service providers to abide by these guidelines, but most do.

Residence experience often trying for many queer students

Story continued from Page 3...

When instances of homophobia come up they are dealt with on a case by case basis. Although UVic has strict policies on harassment, it is difficult to prove and "you can't take someone's home away because someone made a complaint," said Fitterer.

"The education level in residence has to be raised. This is a serious matter."

He suggests the university's housing services hire professionals to work with residence advisors, rather than relying on queer students. He said he would also like housing services to be firmer when it comes to students who act on homophobia and residence advisors who choose to ignore it.

My main concern is someone who is going to do themselves harm because of the psychological abuse they are receiving

Chris Moon, a member of the Pride Collective and a student society director, said he faced homophobia as a student in residence at the University College of the Caribou in Kamloops, B.C. Although some queer students have positive experiences in residence, he said he knows of others who don't.

"My main concern is someone who is going to do themselves harm because of the psychological abuse they are receiving," he said.

"They need to make it clear to residence advisors that if they are negligent, they will be barred immediately."

Lepine agrees with Moon's suggestions. Although she was disappointed with the way housing services dealt with her situation, she said she was mostly disappointed in the students she lived with.

However, now that she has moved off campus, one issue remains unresolved. Housing services gave Lepine a refund for rent from January to April, but she has also requested a refund for her first semester – about $2600.

"Residence is there to be a safe environment for me to study in. If I'm not having my needs met or my issues around safety are denied to me, I don't think I should have to live up to my end of the bargain," she said.

Although Fitterer won't talk about Lepine's case, he said decisions about refunds are dealt with individually.

"If they say they have concerns about safety, but they choose to stick around to the end of exams, I need to determine if there is a true threat to their safety."

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Airwaves and newsstands offer queer views

BY MIRANDA POST

Xtra, xtra read all about it: queer media is here in Victoria. Looking for some rainbow prose and queerly Canadian content?

Victoria's gay, lesbian, transsexual, bisexual and queer-friendly media fans can find queer-produced and inspired media no further than the local bookstore, radio station and Internet café.

The *Lavendar Rhinoceros* is a local lesbian and gay magazine aimed at highlighting the lives, businesses and events of the local queer community, said publisher and editor Barb McLauchlin.

Love child and successor of the *Lesbianews*, the magazine used to focus primarily on lesbian news but is now Victoria's premier lesbian and gay magazine.

When McLauchlin took over the *Lesbianews* four years ago, she said she saw the need to cover more inclusive issues, recognizing the male gay community.

"What I'm hoping to do is build community – a double community," said McLauchlin. The *Lavender Rhinoceros'* circulation is 1,000, but the Rhino's mailing list spans the continent – from Halifax to California to Northern Vancouver Island.

Helen Reed, one of several rotating hosts of *Girl's Night In*, chats it up on the CFUV radio airwaves.

Martlet photo by Carmel Ecker

"A lot of people from back east like the Rhino because it's a microcosm of gay life, it doesn't really matter where you live," McLauchlin said.

Queeries, a publication of UVic's Pride Collective, is trying to reach out to the queer community beyond Ring Road. The publication gives a voice to the collective, but sometimes that's a very white and middle class voice, said editor Helen Reed. She hopes to "reach out to different kinds of sub-cultures in the queer community" this year.

There's only been one edition of the publication so far this academic year, but what stands out is the new format. Reed said the collective chose a zine because the group wants to be as radical as they need to be, without having to worry about the censorship of a publishing company. The most current issue is available outside the Pride office in the Student Union Building.

Queer issues in Vancouver have been headlining *Xtra West*, the city's gay and lesbian biweekly. The colourful, semi-glossy magazine is part of the triumvirate of *Xtra Canada* which is published by Pink Triangle press, a not-for-profit organization.

Though business and political issues constitute the meat and potatoes of *Xtra West*, the magazine also considers the "everyday life for lesbians and gays important" said Kirkby.

Beyond the printed media, queer issues are discussed and rejoiced over the airwaves at CFUV by University of Victoria students and alumni.

"Our mandate is to branch out to our listenership about queer news," said Steve Chappel, co-host of *Queerly Canadian*, a half-hour show on Tuesday evenings.

For the past two years Chappel and Ayla Lepine have been filling the 8:30 - 9p.m. timeslot with the latest queer events and music.

Girls Night In, in contrast, is a synthesis of a number of queer female voices. Tathra Street, the main host who became involved with the show five years ago, like McLauchlin, saw a need for change to the radio show's form when she came on board.

Girls Night In used to be called *Dyke Dimensions* and only discussed lesbian issues, but when it went through a name change, the focus broadened too, said Street.

Now, the show features issues of interest to queer women, instead of queer women's interests, said Street.

"I think it's important for these voices to be on the airwaves... Before I took over, one of the hosts received letters from women up-island saying that *Girls Night In* was their only connection to the queer community," Street said.

There are only three queer radio programs on Vancouver Island. The third show is a syndicated program produced in San Francisco called *This Way Out*.

Despite the fact that there are a lot of great queer media projects happening in and around Victoria, all interviewees agreed that there generally isn't enough Queer media out there.

"There is a lot on the net, and there are more tv shows with gay characters, like *Will and Grace*. It's nice to see but they are often upplayed, its like 'oh queer people are a market'," said Chappel

B.C.'s first openly gay foster dad talks about parenting

BY PATTI EDGAR

Dennis Davey and Zak Tanner might be British Columbia's first openly-queer foster parents.

At least, that's what a social worker told them when they first applied to take children into their home five years ago. Over the years, they have raised four boys and two girls, with ages ranging from four to 16.

And although it's been a fulfilling experience, Davey says there are ways the Ministry of Children and Families could make the foster care system more inclusive of queer people.

Davey and Tanner decided to become foster parents when a family they knew asked if they could take in their child. With a background in youth care, including a master's degree from UVic in education, Davey thought he'd have a lot to offer children as a foster parent. It was also a chance to bring a family-dimension into the couple's nine-year relationship.

"It is important to me as a gay person that we have the same rights and responsibilities to our community as anyone else," said Davey. "I strongly believe it takes a village to raise a child."

They went through the Ministry of Children and Families' screening process and were open from the beginning about being a couple.

Ministry spokesperson Bernadette Murphy said the ministry doesn't have policies on the sexual orientation of foster parents and doesn't keep statistics.

"We welcome all different kinds of foster parents. We don't ask on the information forms. It's up to them to let us know if they are gay, if that's what they want."

If the social worker was correct, and Davey and Tanner are the first openly-gay foster parents in B.C., Davey says it's likely queer people have either avoided foster parenting because they were afraid of the scrutiny or kept their private lives private and didn't volunteer the information.

Since becoming a foster parent, Davey says he has only dealt with one example of discrimination. A child's mother, who had been deemed unfit to parent by a court, told the ministry she didn't want her child placed in Davey and Tanner's home after she was informed they were a same-sex couple.

"The same woman objected to the fact that the child was being placed in with an Irish-Catholic couple but they still placed that child...In this case I'm still convinced that it is a case of discrimination."

Although Murphy couldn't comment on the case, she said the ministry aims at eventually getting children back into their parent's homes and tries to take into account the family and the children's preference.

Kay Dal, president of the B.C. Federation of Foster Parents, said Davey's experience isn't a case of discrimination.

"If having the child placed in a gay home is going to cause a lot of unnecessary conflict with parents [the ministry] is going to travel the path of least resistance."

In five years, Davey and Tanner have only had one queer youth placed in their home. Most queer young people are either uncomfortable with their sexual preference or too afraid to ask to be placed in a queer-friendly home, says Davey. But it's important every child knows the option is available to them and every foster home is queer-friendly, he adds.

Murphy said the act governing foster parenting outlines that children's rights must be respected, including their right to their sexual preference. Every foster parent gets 52 hours of training which includes training on homophobia.

Although Davey says his experience as a foster parent has been on the whole very positive, he says the foster care program could be more queer-friendly.

"They need to have people like myself on boards and in policy making meetings to make sure that voice is heard...there's no workshops, there's no information systems, there's no promotions."

He isn't interested in creating distinctions between queer foster parents and non-queer foster parents, just more acceptance.

However Dal believes it is a non-issue. Sexuality has never come up in the federation's newsletter, she adds.

"Our issue is whether they are good foster parents. Not whether they are gay."

To Davey, what matter's most is the children. Right now, Davey and Tanner are looking after two girls, aged four and six.

"It doesn't matter to them if we are a same sex couple. What matters is whether we get the tangles out of their hair, that Barbie is there when they get home, that a meal is on the table. It's not kids that do the judging, it's adults. And I've found on the whole that this community is very accepting."

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Aboriginal week hits campus

BY PATTI EDGAR

When Amanda Bedard watched a video on residential schools in a UVic classroom, the documentary brought up emotional thoughts of family members.

It was very difficult for the Haida student to hear the classroom of non-aboriginal students talk clinically about the issue once the video had stopped.

"The issues which are so close and personal are being analyzed and criticized and it's hard to separate yourself from [what's] close to you, even though it's necessary," said Bedard.

Her experience in history and anthropology classes at UVic is just one issue she hopes to bring up during a panel discussion on youth and education as part of Aboriginal Awareness Week, which runs from Feb. 14 to Feb. 18 on campus.

"It's important first of all for the aboriginal community. It's a forum where we can all get together and open ourselves and learn from members of the aboriginal community here," said Bedard.

The events are also open to non-aboriginal students and are a chance for people outside the community to gain an understanding of First Nations people, she said.

Don't expect to walk away with a clean-cut definition of what it means to be aboriginal. Diversity might be an emerging theme during the week, with discussions on topics such as two-spirited aboriginal people ("It's not part of the traditional culture of some communities," says Bedard) and leadership ("There's still differing opinions about the roles of women and men in aboriginal communities").

Here's a summary of Aboriginal Awareness Week events:

On Monday, Feb. 14 the week kicks off with a bannock bake-off at 10 a.m. in the Student Union Building.

Feb. 15 at 1 p.m. – Gordon Defrane will be speaking about two-spirited people and HIV awareness.

Feb. 16 at 1 p.m. – Shirley Bear and Mavis Henry will be leading a discussion on women and leadership.

Feb. 17 at 1 p.m. – There will be a discussion on men and leadership, although the speakers haven't been confirmed.

Feb. 18 at 10 p.m. – UVic students Bedard and Jennifer Barg will lead a discussion on youth and education.

All of the discussion events take place in the Human and Social Development (HSD) building in room A254.

The closing ceremony will start at 1 p.m. on Feb. 18 in the Student Union Building's Michèle Pujol room, and will feature poetry, story-telling, an open mike, music and dance.

Pop a wheelie!

UVic student Lisa Roberts tries out a wheelchair used for playing tennis for Disability Awareness Day.

Martlet photo by Merle Veldhuis

UVic and student society square off

BY SIMON GLEZOS

People in the road keeping workers from getting onto campus, damage to cars, and revoked web site and e-mail privileges.

All these topics were on the agenda during a meeting Feb. 7 between administrators and the University of Victoria Student Society (UVSS) in the aftermath of last week's student strike.

"Our discussion focused mostly on communication, specifically the memo that came out saying that they were surprised by our actions," said UVSS chair Morgan Stewart, referring to a press release by vice-president of finance and operations Jack Falk, saying the administration was "surprised and disappointed in the actions of the student protesters."

My understanding is that we fully told them what we were planning, so I don't know what they have to be upset about

"They felt that we were undertaking something we weren't. Our intention was always to block roads, we felt that we told them that," said Stewart.

On Feb. 2 the student society spearheaded a hard-line strike between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m., refusing everyone access to campus. It was a decision that sparked anger from the university's administration who said the student society didn't warn them.

"[We] had been assured that the intention of the picket lines was not to block people from getting on to the campus, merely to delay them," said Bruce Kilpatrick, UVic's communications director.

However, the student society says the administration was fully informed of their intentions.

"My understanding is that we fully told them what we were planning, so I don't know what they have to be upset about," said Summer McFadyen, the student society's director of finances.

Also discussed at the meeting between UVSS executives and Falk and student services director David Clode was the status of students who missed classes because they were unwilling, or unable, to cross the picket lines. The administration pointed out that academic amnesty had been officially granted between 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. — the time of the downtown rally — and stated that those students who were absent before that time would have to apply to the senate for amnesty.

However, Stewart said the student society believes amnesty for students should be automatic, since UVic policy requires that amnesty be given to students who refuse to cross a picket line.

The UVSS considers their action to be part of a strike, since 1158 students voted in favour of strike action last month.

Another issue raised as a result of Feb.2, involves alleged acts of vandalism to cars that tried to cross the picket lines.

Kilpatrick said he had talked to at least one person whose car had been scratched with a key. Campus security received three complaints regarding damaged cars which were directed to the Saanich police department. Both McFadyen and Stewart said they weren't aware of any reports of damage to vehicles.

Another issue discussed in the meeting was that between Tuesday night and Wednesday afternoon, the UVSS website was shut down by campus computer staff. On Thursday Stewart's e-mail account was also shut down.

Kilpatrick said an unusually large amount of electronic activity, in both instances, threatened overloading the entire system.

Stewart is unsure of why the university cut off his electronic privileges, but he questions their motives. He said Falk told him he violated a policy which outlines rules for Internet and e-mail use. However, Stewart says no one told him what section of the policy he was violating and he argues that under the policy, the administration is required to consult with the chair of the department, in this case Stewart himself, which they didn't.

"I'm not particularly put out by this, but there are 1400 students who are affected by this. Various clubs pages, list serves and student groups are all put out by shutting down the UVSS web page."

During the meeting, Falk and Clode promised to reinstate the website and Stewart's e-mail account. Both were running again at press time.

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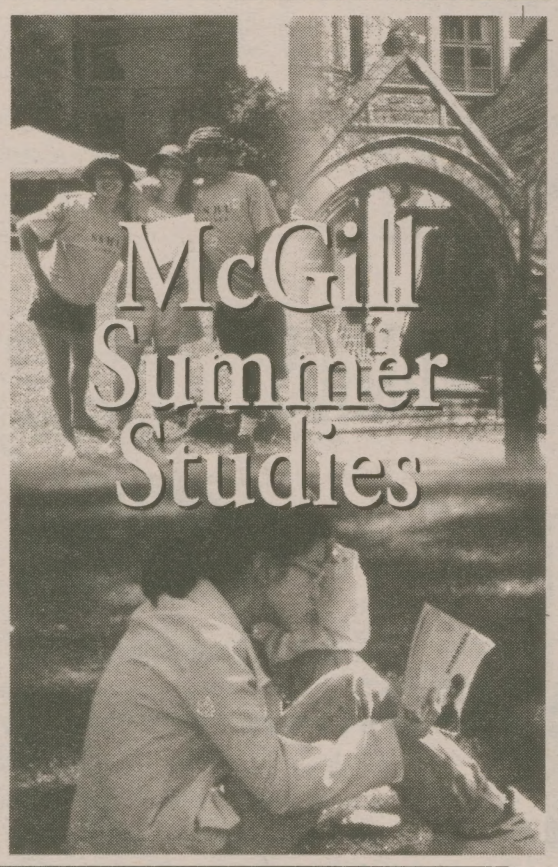

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HAVE YOU SEEN DOUGLAS?

He went missing Jan.25 at Goldstream Park
If you have any information please phone the Langford RCMP at 474-2264

Students honour memory of forgotten Holocaust victims

BY KATHY RAMSEY

Gays and lesbians are often the forgotten victims of the Holocaust.

Last week students at the University of Manitoba took time to honour queer people persecuted during the Second World War by listening to a talk on the history of the pink triangle.

"In Germany in the 1920s, in Berlin especially, [there was] a thriving gay and lesbian community. It would be comparable to something you would see today like in Winnipeg that had organizations, resource centres, clinics, bars, magazines, everything," said Dave Kitzmann, a University of Winnipeg German studies major.

"When the Nazis took over they started closing them down because they didn't fit into Nazi policy, both with what the Nazis thought the morality of the country should be, as well as [going] against the population policy... to increase the number of Germans."

Kitzmann said that the Nazis had a department named the Reich Office for battling homosexuality and abortion.

Homosexuals persecuted by the Nazis and imprisoned in concentration camps were forced to wear a pink triangle to mark their reason for incarceration. Lesbians and others deemed by the Nazis to have "anti-social" traits – such as prostitutes, women who refused to bear children and vagrants – were also incarcerated and a black triangle was used to segregate them.

According to Kitzmann's own research, he estimated that between 5,000 and 15,000 homosexuals were executed.

The pink triangle was reclaimed by gay-liberation groups in the early 1970s, and remains a prevalent symbol for the gay community today.

"[The pink triangle] is used as a symbol of pride and remembrance... Lesbians have been reclaiming the black triangle as well," said Kitzmann.

He said he sees the observance of Pink Triangle Day as a way to combat homophobia both in society and on campus.

"Hopefully all the different groups that were persecuted by the Nazis are going to get their stories told and hopefully that will help to limit discrimination in society today as well... Visibility is very important – the more you're exposed to something, the more you get used to it and the more you can accept it," Kitzmann said.

– from *The Manitoban*

Queer bashing on rise

BY JAMES COPLEY

When 41-year-old Gary Trzaska left a Buffalo, New York gay bar for his car on the corner of Broadway and Titus Avenue, he was being watched.

As he opened his car door, someone swung a chair at him, knocking him to the ground. Three men took turns stomping on his head. A fourth ran from a nearby crowd of young people to join in.

The assailants grabbed his wallet, but left $200 in cash in his pocket. Trzaska died.

Trzaska is one of many victims of the growing anti-gay violence across North America.

According to the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP), a US anti-queerbashing group, at least 33 Americans were killed last year because they were queer-identified, up from 14 the previous year.

Victims of this kind of violence are often afraid of coming forward

In its annual report, NCAVP pointed out that its statistics are incomplete, because it only includes information for the 16 regions it monitors. For example, Matthew Sheppard, the 21-year-old Wisconsin student who was brutally murdered a year ago this month, was not included on the list.

The NCAVP also identified 2,552 threats and acts of physical violence motivated by homophobia. They include a lesbian couple who were shot execution-style in the California desert, a transgendered man stabbed 20 times in the chest in his New York apartment, and a 31-year-old St. Louis, Missouri man beaten by a neighbour, who ordered him to leave the neighbourhood or be killed.

According to Louis Leclerc of Dire Enfin la Violence, a government-funded group that offers information and aid to victims of anti-queer violence, the number of hate-motivated assaults on queers in the Canadian city of Montreal is similar to New York.

"Victims of this kind of violence are often afraid of coming forward," Leclerc said. "It's still taboo [to talk about gaybashing]."

Queers who are bashed come to suffer from fear, paranoia, and, above all, isolation.

Montreal has also had its share of gay-related homicides. Between 1989 and 1993, 14 gay men were murdered. The victims include 24-year-old Dawson College student and queer activist Joe Rose, 51-year-old accountant Yves Lalonde, and 53-year old businessman Brian Booth.

Many of the victims were killed in their own homes. The bodies of 42-year-old Michael Hogue and 36-year-old Robert Panchaud were found nine days apart in January 1993.

Each had been bound and fatally stabbed. The murders chilled the queer community and the similarity of the two murders raised fears that a serial killer was stalking gay men in Montreal.

In November1993, after Anglican priest Warren Eling was strangled by his male prostitute, 65 community groups gathered to discuss anti-queer discrimination and violence.

The Round Table on Violence made many recommendations, including queer sensitivity training for Montreal police officers and a phone service to counsel victims of anti-queer violence.

The result was DELV, a provincially-run queer help line.

According to a Quebec government press release, DELV has received over 4,000 calls.

– from *The Link* (Concordia)

Sexual identy seminar draws crowds

BY MIKE WINTERS

EDMONTON (CUP) – Is the University of Alberta ready to queerify space?

The question of sexual identity drew enough of a crowd recently to fill a seminar room on campus, as students and staff gathered to listen to three speakers in a forum called Queerifying Space.

Kevin Markwell, a speaker from the University of Newcastle in Australia, focused on the Mardi Gras Festival in Sydney and explored its role in the queer community.

Since its inception as a festival celebrating gay and lesbian solidarity in 1978, Sydney's Mardi Gras has sparked similar events worldwide and has grown to be a big business in the tourism industry, he said.

But Markwell concedes that while the festival has liberating elements for the homosexual community, as it becomes bigger, it becomes more of a highly stylized spectacle for the consumption of a straight audience.

He added that as the Mardi Gras festival becomes more conventional, it is in danger of limiting sexual identities as gay/lesbian and other transgendered or queer identities.

"Mardi Gras organizers begin to see themselves as a gay and lesbian organization not open to other bisexual and queer gender-identities," Markwell concluded. "The festival is in danger of becoming a dinosaur by containing its own binary code of straight and homosexual identity sexuality."

Judy Davidson, a PhD of Physical Education from the University of Alberta, touched upon the same point in her upcoming doctoral studies of the Gay Games.

She said the importance of the games lies in its ability to challenge and destabilize outmoded views of sexual identity.

However, she feels that within the games, the focus has been primarily placed on gays and lesbians.

She lamented that, "in the last 10 years, queer theory has become shorthand for gay and lesbian," and that, "with the Gay Games, it has become a homosexual place and not a queer place."

The last speaker, Elise Gotell, a professor of Women's Studies, critiqued the Delwin Vriend Supreme Court discrimination ruling.

She found that although the case was an important and necessary victory for human rights, the rationale given for the victory was flawed.

The Supreme Court reasoned that discrimination over sexual orientation violates human rights because "sexual orientation is a deeply personal characteristic that is unchangeable or changeable at unacceptable cost."

Gotell disagreed with this reasoning, arguing that the ruling is equivalent to putting sexuality into a box and, "implies that sexual identities are innate and rigid while maintaining the norm as heterosexual."

If one describes sexuality as immutable and unmovable, Gotell argued there is no space to challenge the ideology of homosexuality or the box that contains it.

After the forum, attendee Jake Evans commented that while the debate was important he didn't feel that queer issues on campus were supported as much as they could be.

"On campus it's tolerated but not encouraged," he said.

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editorial

Why we do what we do

At the same time as queerness is supposedly becoming more accepted in the public sphere it is still marginalized.

While queers show up occasionally in popular culture, great lengths are always taken to point out that these characters are queer, and therefore different, but not normal. They're seen as comic relief, as props, as window dressing, as stereotypes. They're rarely seen as people.

The Martlet is doing this issue to point out that being queer is just another facet of the infinitely complex thing that is a human personality. Being queer doesn't necessarily mean you're effeminate, or butch, or like shopping, or like sports or damn near anything.

In creating a queer issue this year, we've realized how many subjects have gone untouched by *the Martlet* and, try as we might, we admit we don't give a voice to queer people regularly in our paper. Of course, it could easily be argued that *the Martlet* is ghettoizing queers by dumping all the queer coverage into one token issue.

The Martlet's Queer issue has changed a lot over the past few years. It started with a few stories, got the cover in 1986, progressed to the infamous 1992 'Genitalia cover' and we continue today. We produced this issue at the beginning of February because Valentine's Day is also Queer Awareness Day. A day to remember all the queers that have suffered oppression in the past and continue to be discriminated against by mainstream society. It is also a day to celebrate the contributions and lives of queers.

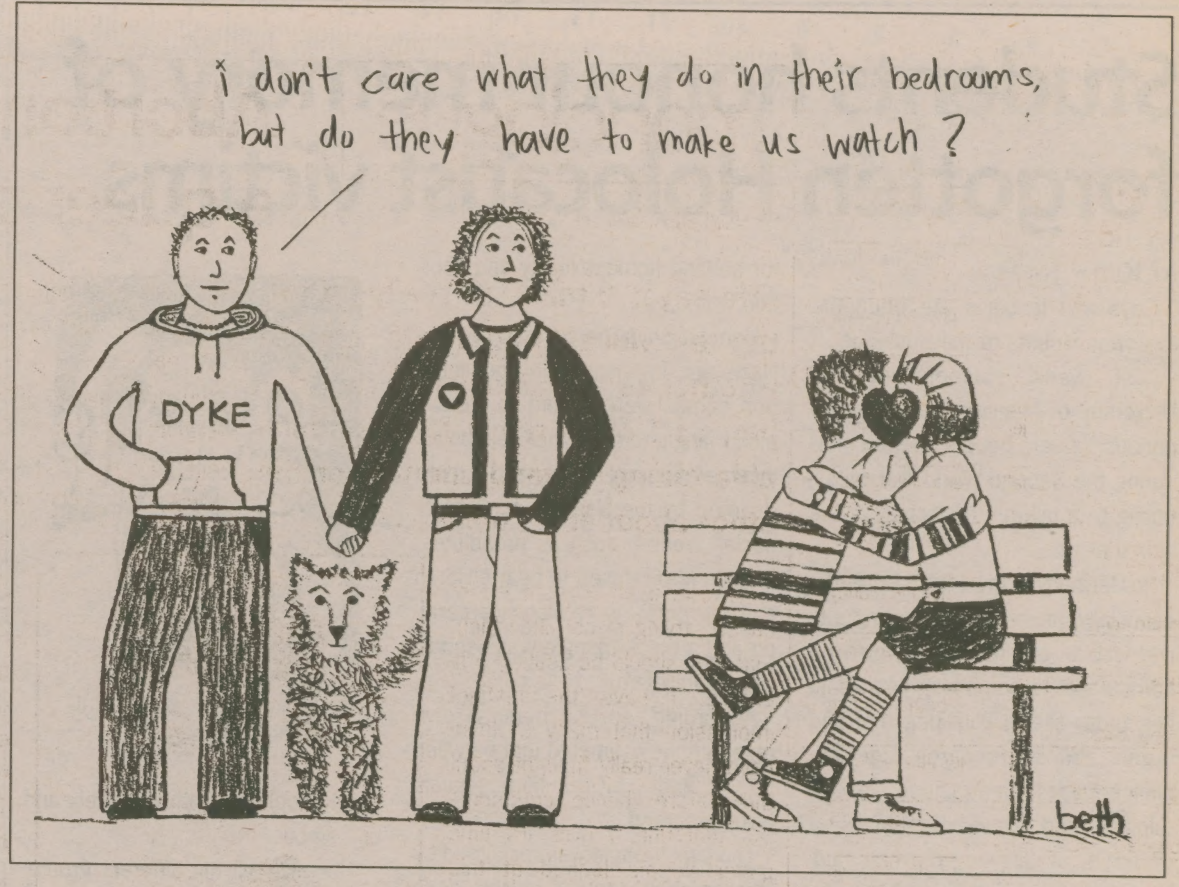
Special issues are also a chance to reach out to new people on campus. It's not the responsibility of the queers on campus to educate UVic about homophobia and heterosexism, it's everybody's responsibility – staff, administrators and students. Inherent in our mandate is the call to act as an agent of constructive social change. We dedicated this week to challenging the way queers are represented in the media. Our medium for change is this newspaper. Give some thought to how your attitude, speech and actions affect others. What's your medium? What are you doing?

At the same time, if anyone feels we've omitted anything in this week's *Martlet*, let us know. We're always open to suggestions on how we can make our newspaper better.

Before we go, we have just a few more reasons why *the Martlet* is doing a queer issue. So read on:

Because people still belittle guys by calling them girls ('come on girls, let's win this game'), because 'you fuckin' faggot' is still considered an insult, because of the glassy-eyed look people get when they think of lesbians having (porn) sex, because our managing editor loves her brother (even though he's an academic jackass) and Shalia, because the world shows us lame-ass, safe and unrealistic depictions of queers (*Melrose Place*, *Ellen*, any Eddy Murphy movie), because we want to fuck the way we want without judgement, because heterocentrism is everywhere, because when we hear homophobic comments it chills us to the bone, because our production co-ordinator is still waiting for the queer revolution, because the most well known queers are Ru Paul, Chastity Bono, Boy George, Melissa Etheridge and Elton John, because 'that's gay' is a way to trash-talk something, because the only 'acceptable' gay looks just like the straight norm, because until there is no need for *the Martlet* to do a queer issue, we will do it.

EDITORIAL TOPICS ARE DECIDED UPON BY STAFF AT EDITORIAL MEETINGS ON MONDAYS AT 4:30 AND ARE WRITTEN BY ONE OR MORE MEMBERS. OPINIONS ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF ALL STAFF.



letters, letters, letters....

SLEAZY TACTICS

I am writing this letter to express my disgust at the manipulative tactics used by the student strike organizers. When asked, most of my professors replied that yes, they would hold class on Feb. 2 out of responsibility to those who had chosen to attend school. Campus newspapers reported that the UVic senate had voted against closing the university. The president of UVic states that the campus was not closed on Feb. 2.

Perhaps this explains my confusion and subsequent shock to see that strike organizers had posted signs everywhere implying that campus would be closed on the day of the strike. Many students arriving to school on Wednesday were told that the school was closed and that classes were not in session.

I would love to believe that the strike protesters were merely misinformed, unfortunately I doubt that this is the case. By using sleazy political tactics organizers have alienated and angered many students who might otherwise have responded to logical argument. It is one thing to express an opinion you hold, it's quite another to demand that everyone else agrees and obeys you by not attending classes which they have already paid for. I think that strike organizers owe an apology to all those that they so blatantly misled and obstructed.

Tara Salter

OBNOXIOUS PICKETERS

The organizers of the strike need to realize that strong arm tactics do not work. I was angry and frustrated by the actions of the some of the students on the picket line, coming away with the thought that I could never sympathize with such ignorant people. Yes, I was one of the students who disagreed with the strike action and attended my scheduled classes. My two experiences on Wednesday morning were polar opposites.

On my first foray, I made it very clear to the picketers that I respected the individual rights of the students to picket. Therefore, I counted upon being respected in my choice to attend classes. I was wrong.

According to the most obnoxious of the picketers, I was either rich, uninformed or both. I never thought I would witness student against student action at UVic.

My second experience was far more pleasant. I was asked if I was aware of the issues, and responded, "Yes." The gentleman inquired as to whether or not I would like a pamphlet. I said, "No thank you," to which he smiled and said, "I hope you'll join us at the legislature later this morning. Have a nice day!" This was the correct way to approach the students entering the campus that morning, non-confrontational and offering information.

To the most zealous of the picketers, you should be ashamed of your conduct toward your peers. To the amiable picketers, thank you for being accepting of differing opinions. As a third year student, I was under the impression that UVic, and its students, celebrate diversity. Despite my first experience, I continue to hope that all UVic students will respect every person's differences without condemnation.

Cathy Witmer

THE ALIENATED MAJORITY

[This letter has been edited for length]

On Feb. 2 we received an e-mail from Morgan Stewart informing us of both the "Student Strike" which was to occur that day and of UVic students overwhelming support for this action. He informed us that picket lines would be put up around campus because of "the result of students voting overwhelmingly in favour of strike action in a campus wide vote." Our first question pertains to what constitutes a majority.

No numbers were given in the e-mail notification of how many students approved of this action. Misleading statements such as the one above lead us to wonder exactly how many students were in favour of this strike. After further research, we see that 76 per cent of 1534 votes cast were for this strike action (1158 in total). The university calendar states UVic total enrollment for 1998-99 as 17,222. What does this mean?

1. Only 8.9 per cent of students felt this an important enough issue to actually vote on it.

2. Only 6.7 per cent of students actually approved of this strike action.

When over 91 per cent of the student population cares so little as to not even vote, we question the statement that UVic students are overwhelmingly in favour of the action taken.

Secondly, we resent the fact that a large minority of students delayed or prevented us from attending our classes the morning of said strike day. (In some cases professors cancelled classes "to show support" we did not pay our tuition to have classes cancelled because of the ranting of so few.)

Thirdly, the methods of preventing students access to UVic could have provoked violence in some situations. When CUPE members held their strike, they informed students politely of the issues and asked them to please not cross. Despite this request we did attend our classes, but their politeness and manner at least made us sympathetic towards their concerns. The few members of the UVic community that were "striking" used quite different tactics. They rudely stated students were not to cross and they prevented vehicles from entering the many parking areas by using various methods.

They effectively eliminated other students choice and right to the education they paid for.

Just something for the 1158 striking students to think about, as well as the 16,604 who chose not to support the UVSS.

Derek Halverson
E. Dunne
B. Anthony
A. Kabakov

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"flying without feet for 51 years"

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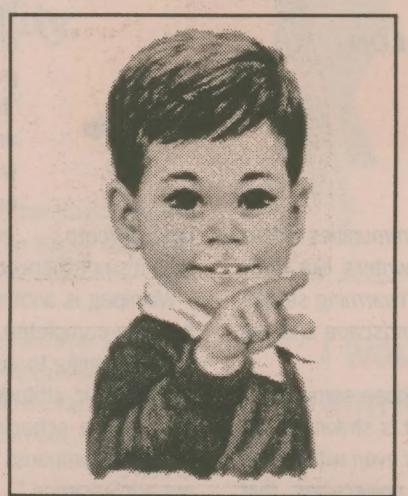
monologue

Abortion: taking a queer stand

BY ANDREA SMITH

He says: "I think it's really up to the individual woman to choose whether or not abortion is right for her, so I don't really feel comfortable taking a stand one way or the other about abortion."

I'm sitting in a room full of queers, trying to convince them that they should be actively pro-choice. I have the distinct impression that many of them have never really thought about this before, hence comments like *that* one. I think it's time queer people looked at this issue. So for those who weren't there in that room, let's review.



In sci-fi films, fetuses grow in shiny glass tubes. This is both tidy and apolitical. We do not live in a sci-fi film. Reproduction is gendered – women incur unique burdens and risks. Elements of society have worked for centuries to take away women's right to control their own bodies. Read a history book – the Inquisition was a very successful campaign to take away women's reproduction choices. Most of the nine million people burned were women and many of them were midwives who had in the past allowed women access to reliable birth control and abortion. To take away a woman's access to a safe, legal abortion is to try and take away her right to control her own body. Not only is it oppressive and sexist, but it won't work. In the '50s and '60s, there were entire hospital wards devoted to caring for women who experienced dangerous 'complications' as a result of botched illegal abortions.

Hopefully, as queer people, we could all agree that homophobia and heterosexism are bad. Where do homophobia and heterosexism come from? Answer: the politics of difference. People don't like queers because they're funny lookin', Pa. Different. Our society teaches us not to be able to communicate or empathize across difference, be it sexual, racial, religious, or economic. To combat these politics of difference is to combat oppression. To focus exclusively on homophobia and heterosexism is to liberate white or male or middle-class queers at the expense of lesbians, two-spirits, trannies and everyone else. As long as we fail to address the politics of difference in our activism, we can never do more than redirect society's loathing. Therefore, effective anti-homophobia work must also be generally anti-oppressive. And that means anti-sexist, and that means pro-choice.

Part of the problem is the way in which the debate has been framed. Being "pro-choice" does not necessitate being "pro-abortion" (you yourself might not ever be comfortable getting an abortion). It means you support women in making their own choices, and that you defend the right of women who choose to abort to be able to do so in a safe, legal, non-stigmatizing manner.

Okay, so maybe you don't consider yourself an activist. Altruism leaves a bad taste in your mouth. Try this on for size, flamer: the abortion debate is about reproduction choice, and if reproductive choice goes, you can bet sexual choice will be soon to follow.

Andrea Smith, a Women's Studies major, aims to be obnoxiously vocal on all political issues.

Go to page 18 for more op/ed:
student strike opinion pieces

"The Line"

BY R.M. STOGRYN

When I was young,
I knew who I was
And who was on my side.
I no longer know what's going on.

I have changed–
Now a stranger to my past.
Things are different
And it's hard for me to go on.

Sometimes at night
I cry myself to sleep.
Frightened of the world around me,
I hide.
Being scared and alone,
I fear that's the cost
Of living on a line
That's better not crossed.

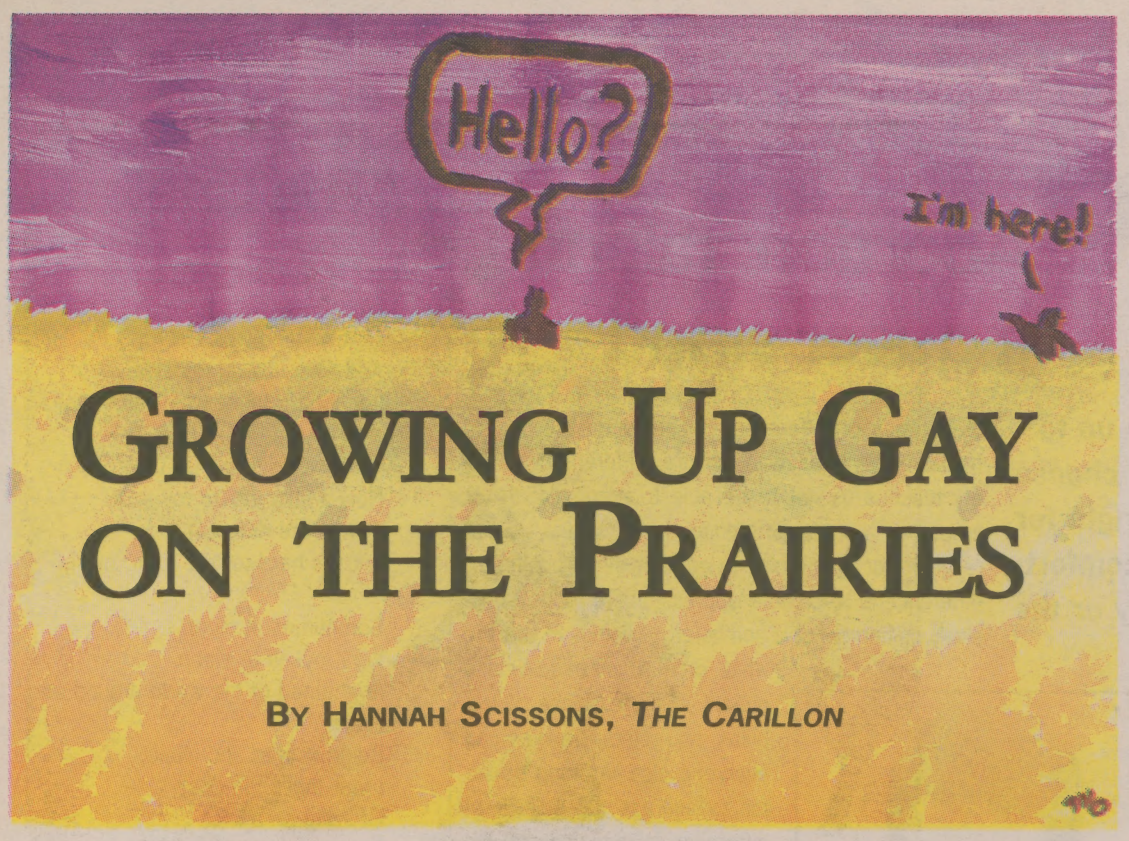
Living a lie
And pretending to be strong,
When fear and love
are tearing me apart.
A forbidden life–
One dangerous for me.
Alienation, fear and hate
Those closest yet unknowing.

Sometimes at night
I cry myself to sleep.
Frightened of the world around me,
I hide.
Being scared and alone,
I fear that's the cost
Of living on a line
That's best not crossed.

Pressure's building,
Time's running out.
Can't bear much more.
Need to break free.

To most I'm hidden.
How could they understand?
But false images need breaking.
I just want you to know who I am.

Sometimes at night
I cry myself to sleep.
Frightened of the world around me,
I hide.
Being scared and alone,
I fear that's the cost
Of living on a line
That's best not crossed.



Growing Up Gay on the Prairies

By Hannah Scissons, *The Carillon*

Small towns on the Prairies have the reputation of being warm, close-knit communities where everyone knows everyone else and no one is ever really alone. Canadian writers like W.O. Mitchell, Max Braithwaite, and Sinclair Ross have idealized prairie life with heartwarming stories about coming of age in small prairie towns: the breathtaking beauty of the landscape and the heartiness required to survive the winters.

But these idyllic images are far from the truth for children who grew up in those same small towns knowing, or thinking, they were gay. When they share their stories, what is striking is the lack of community many of them experienced: they were strangers, sometimes even within their own families. It was not until they moved to larger communities, most often universities, that they became able to admit to themselves and to others who they really were and "come out." Some of them still cannot share their entire experience, and have elected to keep their names hidden.

Small-town Saskatchewan

Steven Jackson is a fourth-year film student at the University of Regina who grew up in small-town Manitoba knowing there was something different about himself but not willing to confront what it might possibly be. He says his opinion towards his sexuality was that if he didn't think about it, it didn't exist. *This opinion is reflected in many small towns' attitudes towards gays and lesbians. "The small town mentality is basically, if it's not in [people's] faces, then they won't deal with it," he says.*

For young men and women with questions about their sexual orientation, small towns can be the worst possible place to be. The need to fit in, to be like other kids their age, is exacerbated by the fact that if they don't fit into the expected mold of behaviour there's nowhere else to turn. For Jackson, the fact that he was the only boy in his grade who didn't play hockey or get fazed by the "sexual education" part of health class were clues that he was different from everyone else, but he didn't dare deal with his questions about himself because there was nowhere to get the answers. "I really hid myself away," he says. "I just felt absolutely different from everyone else but I didn't know what it was."

The habit of retreating into himself lasted throughout his years of growing up in Manitoba, and it wasn't until a year ago that he had found enough of the answers to come out to his friends at university. Since then, he has become more active and open, taking over the chair position with G-BLUR (Gays, Bisexuals and Lesbians at the University of Regina) and addressing gay issues through his essays and films for classes.

One of Jackson's goals is to bring homosexuality more into the light in his hometown, so that other young men and women won't have to go through the same process of withdrawal he went through. He knows, though, that the only way to accomplish this will be to go back there and share his experience. Both Jackson and his mother are concerned with the issue of education in small town communities. One of the first things they plan on doing, together, is putting some books dealing with homosexuality into his hometown's public library.

"I don't want others to go through the same things I went through, where I didn't have a clue," says Jackson.

"Derek" grew up in southeastern Saskatchewan and he says the experience was anything but positive. "To be quite honest with you," he says, "I hated it – growing up gay on the prairie. It was not a pleasant experience by any means."

He experienced extreme alienation, feeling singled out and made very aware of the fact that he was gay every day. Lewd comments were the norm, especially in junior high and high school when everyone his age was reaching puberty and beginning to feel attracted to the opposite sex. Although Derek had a number of close friends who were very supportive of him when he came out, there were also too many of his fellow students who had homophobic attitudes.

"As a result of coming out in a small town, being gay is more a part of you, I think. You're forced to be more aware of it," Derek says. "Why? Because there aren't many gay people in small towns. It's like a freak show aspect."

Aaron Kyle's story of growing up in small-town Saskatchewan is not very different from Steven's and Derek's. Kyle, currently in his first year of arts at the U of R, spent the early years of his life in a town of about 300 people. Kyle knew he was different from his peers, and unfortunately they suspected it too. He dealt with derogatory comments throughout his days in school, but says that many of his schoolmates were still surprised when he began to openly acknowledge his being gay. "They harassed me their whole lives, and then people act like, 'Oh my God I can't believe he's gay,' when they find out," Kyle says. "I don't understand that."

The only explanation he can offer is that people in small towns need to be educated on homosexuality. He's found the U of R community to be more open towards gays and lesbians, and credits the fact that the people are more educated and mature. Kyle believes that the situation for young people growing up in small towns with questions about their sexuality can only improve. He points to television programs like "Dawson's Creek" and "Will and Grace" that have gay characters who are presented as normal and accepted. The problem with small towns, he says, is that the people living there don't know how to react to someone who is gay. "I think that the attitude of people in small towns will not change until people like me go back and challenge them, because everyone runs away to the cities to be gay."

Prairie cities

Prairie cities, however, still aren't very welcoming to young gays, lesbians, and bisexuals. "Jason" grew up in Regina and is currently pursuing his graduate studies at the University of Regina. Even after he realized during high school that he was gay he decided to ignore the issue. "The best way to describe it was that I put the aspect of me on a shelf," he said in an e-mail.

Jason says when he was growing up, the atmosphere in Regina towards homosexuality reflected his own attitude at that time. "Regina seems to 'accept' homosexuality by not discussing it in any way. It is something like if we don't talk about it, it doesn't exist or if we don't talk about it we neither have to condone or fully accept it." Recently, Regina has had to deal with the issue. Last summer, for example, town council accepted the request from the gay and lesbian community to proclaim a "Gay Pride Week." There has also been some controversy surrounding a Saskatoon newspaper ad that referred to passages from the bible that have been interpreted as condemning homosexuality. "Regina is a gray area when it comes to sophistication, openness and acceptance," Jason says. "It has some aspects of a metropolis in some respects but in others it is still a small hick town."

"Ben" also grew up in Regina, and after taking a few classes at the University of Regina he's currently living in Montreal. He says there is a huge difference between Regina and larger cities in regard to attitudes toward the gay and lesbian community. In Montreal, he notes, there is an entire street that "belongs" to the gay community, draped in gay pride flags, with coffee shops and clothing stores openly welcoming gays. "It's a good experience to even walk down the street," Ben says. Regina has no such street, and there's only one nightclub in town that openly welcomes gays and lesbians. "In Montreal [and] Toronto . . . everyone knows the gay community is there. Regina doesn't even have that, so if it's not there to acknowledge, it doesn't exist," Ben says.

Winnipeg is another city difficult to grow up gay in, says "Susan," a 23-year-old bisexual who recently completed her bachelor of arts at the University of Manitoba. Around the time Susan was beginning to discover she was different from other girls, she also began to be exposed to homophobic attitudes. She says there was extreme homophobia exhibited, especially towards girls, at the schools she attended. "Winnipeg is not the best place to be anything other than straight, compared to Vancouver or San Francisco, for instance, and I felt very alone throughout adolescence."

Elyssa Warkentin, a fourth-year English student at the University of Manitoba, also says it is difficult to be openly lesbian in Winnipeg. She didn't come out until after she had completed high school and spent a year working in England. She says the area in which she has had the most difficulty is her church. "I come from a Mennonite background, and Winnipeg has a huge Mennonite population. I grew up in the church, and that certainly didn't make coming out any easier," Warkentin says. She admits thinking, however, that it would have been much more difficult growing up in small-town Manitoba. "I've met a lot of gay people from rural Manitoba, and for a lot of them, the first thing they did after coming out was to move to Winnipeg."

Educating

Education is one area in which most gays and lesbians agree there could be measures taken to improve the situation of young people in small towns with questions about their sexuality. For most of the young men and women currently in their 20s who grew up in small towns, the issue of homosexuality was rarely addressed within their classrooms. When it was, the attitude was invariably negative, especially on the part of fellow students. "I can only recall homosexuality being 'discussed' in one of my high school classes," says Jason. "[The teacher] passed around a pamphlet that showed and described safe gay sex. It was passed around with students not looking at it or they looked at it very briefly, seemed disgusted and passed it on." Susan's experience was that homosexuality was taboo, never discussed in the classroom. Warkentin says that when it was discussed by some of her classmates, the word she remembers hearing used was "disgusting." Kyle says he can remember instances when the topic of homosexuality would come up in class and everyone would just make fun of it.

Within the Saskatchewan curriculum, the topic of homosexuality is not specifically addressed. Bev Huntington, a Saskatchewan health education consultant, says there are opportunities for teachers to bring up homosexuality within the classes, but there is no mandatory requirement for it. "I can see where there are young people who go through their school experience and in middle years they're not sure of themselves," she said. "There may not have been much in the school curriculum to help them out."

In Alberta, homosexuality is even less in the open, says Kris Wells, a 28-year-old former teacher who is currently working to have gay and lesbian issues addressed within schools. "I believe there's a lot of silence in schools, and unfortunately silence says as much as words do," says Wells.

When he was first teaching in the Alberta school system after graduating from the University of Alberta in 1994, Wells was not yet openly gay and he found himself increasingly torn about how he was identifying himself to his students. One student in a school he substituted in committed suicide shortly after coming out. "What if I had been able to be an out gay model to that kid?" Wells asked himself afterward. Only recently have studies been conducted specifically addressing the question of how many young adults who commit suicide do so because of questions about their sexual orientation. In one 1995 study it was found that gay and bisexual male youth are about six times more at risk for suicide attempts than heterosexual youth and they may account for as many as 40 to 50 per cent of male youth who attempt suicide. Kris is particularly concerned about creating a safe environment within schools for gay and lesbian youth. He says there's less movement on that front in Alberta than in its neighboring provinces, but at least there's some movement. "I think Alberta is definitely in the dark ages. The Reform [Party] movement, [Ralph] Klein's Conservatives have a very strong presence in the province," he says.

Wells points out, however, that it is not only in small towns that young gays and lesbians face hardships. "The issues are the same for young people anywhere: isolation, alienation, loneliness, the sense of not belonging."

The co-ordinator of the Canadian Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Resource Directory, Kevin Cassidy, agrees, although the problems can be exacerbated in a rural environment. "It doesn't matter if you're in rural Manitoba or Toronto, you still have to confront yourself and find resources in your area," says Cassidy. "Probably, you'd have a greater fear of expressing yourself in a smaller community."

Kyle would agree. "I probably wouldn't be out if I was still in my hometown," he says. "I used to regret where I grew up but I don't anymore. The experiences I've had have definitely made me a stronger person."

Hannah Scissons writes for **The Carillon,**
the student newspaper at the University of Regina.

Graphic by Marie Olinik, The Carillon's *graphics editor.*

The End of Gay?

Canadian author Bert Archer has some new and somewhat controversial ideas on sexuality.

By Tom Peacock, *The Ubyssey*

I'm walking with author Bert Archer through Winnipeg's Exchange District, our heads bowed against the Arctic wind the city is so well known for. We are talking, but I can barely hear anything above the gritty, swishing of cars passing by, spraying the dirty slush that covers the city's streets.

We're heading towards a coffee shop that Archer managed to find the day before. He's only been in Winnipeg for twenty-four hours, since arriving from his hometown Toronto, but he quickly found the nearest decent coffee place. He likes them. He doesn't go out much. He's sociable, but he's not one for clubs; he likes to just sit and talk. And, as I am soon to find out, he's a master of the art.

It was only after Archer finished college that he came out, I discover once we've settled down in some nice big chairs in the warm and crowded, but quiet, shop. He'd already had a boyfriend, but they had kept their relationship secret. When they broke up, and Archer wanted to get noticed, he got active. He bought a t-shirt that brandished the slogan "I can't even think straight." He marched, he sang, he fucked his way into the gay community.

Then, for some strange reason, he found himself with a girlfriend. It didn't last. It couldn't, of course. He was gay. No two ways about it. But then again, as he now qualifies with a laugh, "I didn't necessarily think girls were icky." Oh. Okay, so, was he bisexual? No. That word is usually just an excuse, he explains, nothing else. As he would later write, "too many of those who had ended up gay had gone through a self-professed bisexual period for that to be taken too seriously." Besides, three out of four of Archer's first partners were as straight as they come. Was there something more to this? Archer thought so. He figured the very ideas of sexual identity and sexual attraction were about due for some rethinking. So he wrote a book.

As Archer re-tells his story—boarding school in Victoria, his mother dying when he was fifteen, the distance that grew between him and his father, his coming out, and, eventually, his placing of himself within a sexually liberated landscape—his book, *The End of Gay and the Death of Heterosexuality*, begins to appear as a watermark on a very interesting life.

But the book is more than a simple autobiography. Archer recognized that the mainstream way of thinking about sexual identity needed to be examined more carefully. For this reason, a lot of his book is historical and analytical. Nevertheless, it's still very digestible.

"The style that I find the most valuable is totally accessible, conversational, humorous and entertaining," he explains. "Everyone has loads of things to do, and I can't blame anyone for putting a book down that's starting to bore them." Archer, who moonlights as one of Toronto's best-known book critics, holds this engaging style throughout his book.

Of course, Archer's own life is tightly bound to his work. There is no safe distance between his experiences and his theories of sexual identity and attraction. "My own experiences," he later tells me, "are one of the main reasons I'm more and more convinced that your brain does play a much bigger role in your sexual attractions than people think it does."

Unlike most of us, when it comes to that most sticky of issues, Archer has come to the point where he doesn't take much of anything for granted.

Archer has tried a lot of things. He's had sex with a seventy-year-old, with someone a hundred pounds overweight, with a young man dressed as a woman who wanted to dominate him ("I had to ask myself if I was any less of a man after that," he says with mock machismo). He's had sex with his best friends, with random men and women through tele-personals, and with prostitutes.

"Frankly," he admits, "I'm usually hard pressed to come up with a reason not to have sex. I've had sex with lots of people that I've been completely unattracted to, just sometimes actively to see what it's like."

But the fact that Archer is so promiscuous or liberated or experimental, or whatever you or he decides to call it, seems unimportant when you meet him.

Archer's not, as he terms it, a "femmebot," an overwhelmingly feminine, immediately identifiable gay, white male. Instead, he's a slight thirty-year-old guy who looks a bit like Moby, whose eyes flash with intelligence, and whose speech is so deliberate and careful that it forces you to quickly re-jig your questions all the time so that they'll fit into the totally altered place where your mind is being led—a place where, as his book states, "we can talk about sex like, say, we talk about food."

Later in our conversation, as we discuss how he finally got around to writing his book, Bert admits that he has been fascinated with the idea of reading, writing and propagating ideas since he was in high school. "In grade ten, I became really excited about it—how to communicate, how to convince people of things, and how to express things in words."

Archer's also a damn good listener. I ask him about this after watching him spend over half an hour following an already long question period during one of his talks entertaining questions from a stereotypical "femmebot," who has become totally flustered by the whole "end of gay" thing.

An open mind, Archer explains, is an essential component for anyone who's trying to tackle his controversial theories, or live according to his ideas. "It's something you do," Archer tells me. "Something you think about, you work at, you wonder, 'okay, why am I attracted to this person and not others? Why do I take some people seriously and not others?' And you eventually decide what criteria are valid and which ones aren't."

Archer's own levelheadedness means that there is not the slightest crack in his presentation, not even a remote indication of any normal human weakness. It's almost off-putting. But then, there's a lot of humour and good interesting conversation as well, so it's not really an issue.

I would have liked to call it the beginning of something, but I didn't have a word for it.

Photo provided

Nevertheless, the fact that Archer always makes such complete and utter sense means that I find myself bringing up more and more extreme examples of sexual perversion and sexual exploitation, in hopes that his arguments will falter. But it doesn't happen. Of course, Bert admits, bad behaviour is bad behaviour, but sex isn't the culprit. It's ourselves and our underhanded treatment of the subject.

"Society has loads of checks and balances," says Archer, when I ask him whether the rules of sexual etiquette that we adhere to exist for a reason, "all under the assumption that sex is a huge, big untamable force that if you don't keep absolutely in check will bust loose. Most of this comes from a total lack of sexual experiences, a lack of incorporating sex into different parts of our lives."

Pornography? Archer sees it as a valuable educational tool, and a lucrative business for those smart enough to take advantage of people's insatiable appetite for the stuff.

Prostitution? "We decide what exploitation is good based on the trade-offs," he says. "People decide, with prostitution that involves women or younger people, that there is no balance possible, that the person on the receiving end is always in the abject position of absolute victimization, and that's not necessarily the case. There are certainly cases of abuse, rape, or men and women who have no idea what they're doing 'cause they're so fucked-up on drugs, but those are different issues, different kinds of transactions."

Basically, Archer just wants us to re-assess all our basic beliefs about sex and sexual identity. "If you think hard enough, you can see that this is really right; you can see that sex is not so cut-and-dry the way we've been saying it is," he says.

If this is really right, well, then we might consider the idea of gay sex (or straight sex if we identify ourselves as gay) happening without there being a fundamental change in our sexual identity; that in fact we could have sex with a same-sex partner, enjoy it, and by all accounts, still be straight; or, have sex with a member of the opposite sex, and still be gay. Hence the end of gay and the death of heterosexuality.

Granted, this is a lot for some people to stomach. And what about gay pride, and all it has accomplished? Archer believes that the revolutionary slogans of the movement's early years have served their purpose, that now it's time to move on to more subtle forms of affirmative action. He compares the gay movement to the women's movement, and the shift in the latter's arguments towards notions of equivalency as opposed to equality. "Women are now saying, 'Yes women are different, but difference is not inferiority.' If you try to introduce that kind of subtlety into the original argument," Archer says, "you just lose all the force of it, and things go way more slowly than they did."

But in spite of the fact that Archer's theories may be more subtle, less differentiating, the title of his book is downright confrontational. So calling the book "The End of Gay" was a tough choice for him to make. "I would have liked to call it the beginning of something, " he says, "but I didn't have a word for it."

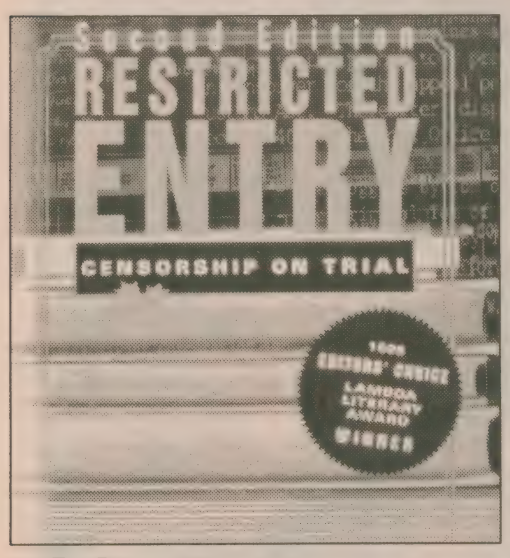
For obvious reasons, the title doesn't wash too well with the gay community, some of whom still march, dance, and champion their "difference." I ask him what sort of feedback he's gotten from members of the community, and he tells me that, for one thing, the gay press' response has been quite universally negative.

As the light outside wanes, and we get up to leave, I ask Archer what he expects people to do, now that the book is written and the word is out: that sex is no big deal, and that sexual identity is not necessarily fixed or binding. It's fine and good on paper, but what about out there, in reality?

"A lot of people's first impressions of what I'm trying to say is that I'm arguing that everyone should be sleeping with everyone else, and I'm definitely not saying that at all. I think most of what I'm talking about should be going on in your head. Most of it should be you realizing the nature of yourself sexually and then doing with that whatever you want."

Tom Peacock is the features editor at The Ubyssey, *the student newspaper at the University of British Columbia.*

Little Sister's to battle in Supreme Court



BY EM BEINHAUER

Looking for a book on the history of lesbian art? A t-shirt, perhaps? Or how about a battle for equality?

All of this, and more, can be found at Little Sister's Book & Art Emporium, located in the belly button of Vancouver's West End. Little Sister's specializes in gay and lesbian books, magazines, videos and music. They also carry gift items, clothing and adult play toys (just in case you were wondering).

As for the equality you were looking for, it just might become available in March, when Little Sister's will thump their fists in the Supreme Court of Canada. For the last 10 years, they've been caught up in a frustrating legal foray against Customs Canada, which has repeatedly seized books, videos and other store goods, at the Canadian - US border. Little Sister's brought on the suit against Customs Canada in an effort to rip out an unconstitutional ly interpreted section of the Customs Act that has, thus far, allowed Customs to apprehend the book store's materials, declaring them obscene.

After dragging themselves through B.C. Supreme Court and the Court of Appeals, Little Sister's was given a break, when, in April 1996, Justice Kenneth Smith ordered Customs to pay $170,000 of their legal costs. Since then, the fight has continued only to wind up facing a final end this year.

On Mar. 16, Little Sister's will venture into Ottawa for their Supreme Court trial, where the judges will rule on whether or not Customs Canada must finally leave them alone. One of those attending the trial will be store manager Janine Fuller, who's been with the store since 1989.

Canadian Customs shouldn't be able to disrupt the rights of the Canadian people."

"I feel very positive about [the upcoming trial]; it's time for it to happen," Fuller said. She sounded tired (perhaps because the store is open from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m., every day of the week), yet not hopeless, as she said: "It's extremely exciting because it's our first time going to the Supreme Court of Canada." It will not only be the first time, but also the last; no case can return a second time. For Little Sister's, this is the end of the line.

However, people have questioned the motivation to fight such a long and arduous battle.

"We just want gay and lesbian people to have access to their material. Canada Customs shouldn't be able to disrupt the rights of the Canadian people."

Even if the Supreme Court does not rule in favour of Little Sister's, the effect will be mostly psychological. They are not planning on closing down if this does not turn out the way they hope. Little Sister's will continue, whether Customs Canada likes it or not, to supply the gay and lesbian community with their rightful material.

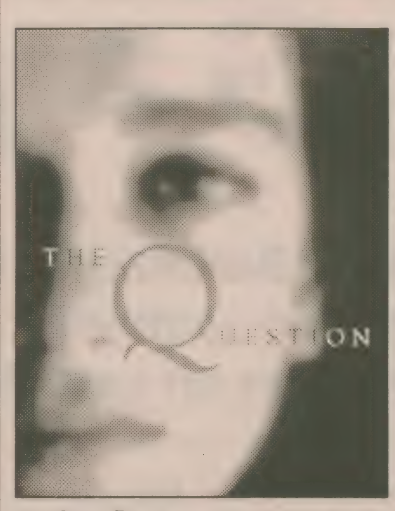
The right to provide this material, unfortunately, must be bought. Little Sister's has to raise $60,000 to pay for the legal fees for the big event. So the next time you're in Vancouver, stop in at Little Sister's (1238 Davie Street), whether it's to get a magazine, take a peek around, or wish them luck in court.

For full tooth and nail information about the Little Sister's war with Customs Canada, grab the book: *Restricted Entry: Censorship on Trial* (by Janine Fuller and Stuart Blackley), or visit the Little Sister's web site at http://lsisters.com/index.html, which will have trial information in a week's time.

If you feel like helping them in their fight against unconstitutional censorship, donations can be sent to the Little Sister's defense fund at:

Little Sister's Book & Art Emporium
1238 Davie Street
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6E 1N4

Lesbian infidelity story lacks spice and vitality



BY ANN BEHENNAH

Barbados-born, Canadian author Austin Clarke just received the W.O. Mitchell Literary prize for his latest novel, *The Question*. While it is a dramatic, image-rich, thought-provoking creation, it is not what anyone would call a rollicking good time.

The Question is narrated by a Caribbean man who works in a downtown Toronto court listening to the plight of ethnic would-be refugees. He has a mysterious Filipino lover called Room – a highly religious, repressed creature whose non-existent personality is entirely overshadowed by Clarke's descriptions of the Chinese army suit she wears to bed. The narrator suddenly meets a sensuous, hedonistic woman at a party. So overwhelmed by their initial meeting (which involves endless descriptions about their wine-drinking), the narrator never returns to Room but instead goes home with the sensuous woman and later marries her.

As the plot struggles to progress, the reader is drawn to certain glaring issues. Namely, the narrator's wife seems to have a very close relationship with her best friend Eireene. They buy panties for each other, are always together, and flirt more with each other than with the narrator. As it turns out, the narrator's wife has a few little secrets she needs to reconcile from her past. Mysteriously enough, the characters in *The Question* don't really have any other friends except each other. However, I think if they invited me over for their Friday pasta night I would have to refuse for fear of being bored to death.

The narrator puts the sleeper grip on any situation and spends most of his time talking to a Hawaiian bubble bath doll in the tub instead of his wife. When the novel arrives at its bizarre and startling climax, the narrator responds in his typical low-key, passive-aggressive manner. The best character is the dog who just runs around pooping everywhere as if to provide an obscene element of comedy.

In true CanLit fashion, *The Question* contains the requisite portions of incest, child abuse, lesbian love scenes and gender-relation difficulties, as well as a great deal of moping about. Though low on action, *The Question* does indeed contain much beautifully rich, seductive prose and hints at the difficulties of being an immigrant in Canada. The overall meaning nonetheless is obscured by the overwritten tensions between three characters who never really seem to come alive. Poetic and haunting, but infuriatingly dull, *The Question* lacks spice.

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Queer culture in Victoria actually does exist

BY ED JOHNSON

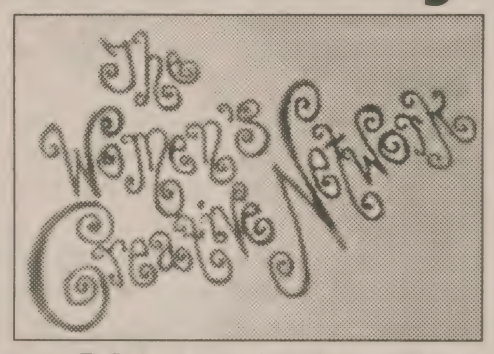
So you think you are queer? What's next?

Four years ago, I asked myself those two questions. I answered, "Yes!" to the first, and "I have no clue" to the second. Then after a long period of reflection and coming to terms with my sexuality, I decided to do something about the next step. This would mean stepping out of my closet and meeting other queers. But where do I go? Who do I ask?

I found myself wondering whether or not Victoria even has a queer community and quickly learned that it does. In fact, it has a multi-gendered, multi-cultural, multi-aged, bona fide, queer community. One that includes a diverse population living in and around the city. Even though Victoria does not have a distinct queer district, like the Castro in San Francisco or the West End in Vancouver, it does have a number of organizations, collectives, bars and clubs to serve its diverse queer community.

Organizations like the Victoria Youth Pride Society (VYPS), AIDS Vancouver Island (AVI), the UVic Pride Collective and the Camosun Pride Collective are a few of these outreach groups in Victoria. The mandate of these organizations is to work with queers and better their lives in our fair city. All have meetings that you can attend and most have offices that you can visit to gain more information about their work and the current issues that affect the queers of this city. Most of these organizations have web sites and e-mail as well, for those of you that are technologically inclined.

At UVic, the Pride Collective works to provide a voice and safe place for queers on campus. The office also provides a link to all of the other organizations listed above and to events as they are informed of them. It also has a library of current books and information on issues like coming out, queer sex education, queer student life, and relationship development. To find out more about the events it provides, both social and political, check out the calendar and bulletin board in and outside the office.



Victoria also has a queer night life with a number of options. Downtown bars and clubs include a variety of atmospheres. Skybar, BJ's Lounge, the Limit on Wednesdays and Sundays, and the G-spot (at the Women's Creative Network) are all queer-friendly businesses. All these places provide a fun place to hang out and meet people. For a more extensive list of gay-owned and friendly businesses pick up a copy of the *Pink Pages*, available in many places across town and at all of the organizations listed above.

Queer culture can also be found in the air and on the screen in Victoria. CFUV (102 FM), UVic's campus radio, airs "This Way Out" on Mondays at 1 p.m., "Girls Night In" on Mondays at 8 p.m. and "Queerly Canadian" on Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m. All these programs are great to listen to and provide queer music and information. Also at UVic, Cinecenta shows a number of queer films each month with its great lineup of movies. This venue is great for flicks that are hard to find and high in quality.

Victoria's queer culture is out there but sometimes it's hard to find. So if you ever find yourself asking the two questions above, hopefully you will now have a start in answering them.

Marriage shifts focus of queer community

BY JAMES COPLEY

At last summer's gay and lesbian pride parade in Toronto, I was shocked back to reality by a group of three black-clothed youths dragging a coffin on wheels. Amid the contingents of gay business executives, the gay steelworkers union, the Coca-Cola and MAC cosmetics floats, and many, many gay religious groups, this display was tiny. A man handed me a pamphlet that looked like it had been put together on a home computer in somebody's basement.

It described a queer woman who committed suicide because of the homophobic pressures in her high school. The pamphlet ended with: "Let us stop the death. Raise your voice. Get involved. Break up fights. Stop harassment."

It was the only thing in the parade that mentioned violence at all. Even though queer teen suicide is increasing at an alarming rate in this country and though American statistics show an alarming increase in hate-motivated murder, these issues rarely appear in the queer press or are even alluded to at gay pride, when we have the benefit of mainstream media attention. These problems are always secondary in importance to the issue of same-sex marriage.

This is part of a larger problem, which is the increasing narrow-mindedness within the queer community itself.

When the community got its first taste of wider acceptance a few years ago, some of our members began to believe that a 1950s-style family existence was possible – a *Leave it to Beaver* with two Wards instead of a Ward and a June. Books began appearing with titles like *Virtually Normal* and *A Place at the Table*. The gay marriage issue, pushed forward by our lobby groups, became all-important.

A culture war began. It started with well-known queer activists like Larry Kramer speaking out against gay men having sex in public. Then this war began to take several bizarre turns. Some gay bars have now begun imposing dress codes. A queer punk friend of mine says that the bouncer at the now-defunct gay bar K.O.X. wouldn't let him in, because of how he was dressed. In San Francisco, punks and transgendered people, feeling unwelcome in the larger pride parade, held one of their own.

What is the ultimate goal of the gay-marriage obsession? The usual claim is that it's to make us more like the larger heterosexual world. But is this possible? The proverbial 1950s family never really existed, except in odd isolated cases. Divorce rates are now rapidly increasing and family violence statistics are getting scarier. Our community is lost in a fantasy land somewhere between Oz and McCarthy-era middle America.

People are dying, and yet we obsess over the image of ourselves walking down the aisle. Most of us fight for this, not just for the practical reasons of immigration laws and health benefits, but because we are desperate for some paternalistic approval from church and state.

In the process, we are marginalizing our own. For instance, every gay pride parade now raises a chorus of complaints about the drag queens. This usually takes the form of "people will think we're all like that." Even worse is our treatment of the transgendered community. The usual response to them in the queer press is silence. Racism and sexism are problems in gay (as well as heterosexual) communities.

The queer community cuts across all boundaries of sex, gender, race, religion, politics, ability and class. It has the potential to be a model of diversity and to prove that very different people are able to work toward common goals. But if the most bourgeois and puritanical members of the community insist on jettisoning everyone else, the community will continue to fragment. Meanwhile, our real problems will worsen and more people will die.

From the comfortable suburbs, the leaders of our lobby groups and media services have begun to wage an abstract culture war. They want us to be seen as "normal" and are prepared to make the community look conservative. But the real struggles continue, in dark side streets, in high schools, and in hospital rooms. And these are being lost, while our political resources are being wasted in our quest for a church ceremony and piece of government paper.

–*The Link*, Concordia University

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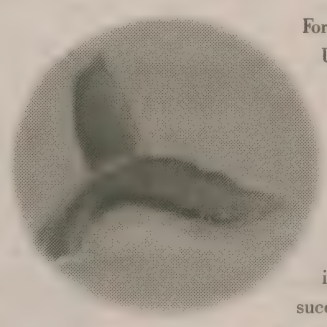

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Valternative Groovefest a welcome alternative

BY CARMEL ECKER

For the fourth year in a row, Victorians fed up with the traditional way of celebrating Valentine's Day have an alternative.

Valternative Groovefest, to be hosted by Vancouver drag queen, Simone, and Diva Las Vegas, has "anti-fashion" designers and models, dancers and theatre groups excited.

The Vertigo stage will feature such treats as theatre group Aphrodite's All-purpose Dog Wax (a.k.a. Aphy's Wax), South African Gumboot Dancers and the anti-fashion show.

Spiderwear clothes designer, Ida Eriksen, said the energy and excitement surrounding Groovefest is incredible.

"People were so happy and wonderful... The only thing that compares to it is the reggae festivals that my daughters and I used to go to," Eriksen said of previous shows.

Eriksen isn't the only one excited about the event.

The phone at the Women's Centre has been ringing off the hook since January with calls about Groovefest from throughout Victoria and Vancouver.

"The word has spread so quickly across the Island and mainland that it's pretty exciting to be involved in," said event co-ordinator, Kim Benson.

Groovefest's co-ordinators have hit only a couple of bumps this year. The first hurdle was a late start. Organization didn't begin until mid-January instead of November, which has made preparations a little stressful for the co-ordinators.

The second was people's reaction to a form co-ordinators used to ensure diversity among the anti-fashion show models. The "model diversity form" asked questions about ethnic background and sexual orientation.

Salma Kahale, who organizes the models for the anti-fashion show, said the form was developed last year because co-ordinators felt uncomfortable asking volunteers these questions face to face.

Benson said organizers asked the models to fill out the form "because we try to have a representation of all types because [Groovefest] is a celebration of diversity."

To make sure everyone has equal representation, the anti-fashion show has a quota that 50 per cent of the models be from groups that are under-represented in the media.

When some volunteer models saw the form, they felt uncomfortable. One clothing designer (who doesn't want to be named to avoid complications before the show) said two of her friends nearly backed out of modeling because of the form.

"We all think the form is a really dumb thing," she said. "I thought it was kind of in bad taste."

However, the designer said she is positive about the event and doesn't want to let politics ruin it.

Benson said she and the other two co-ordinators decided to stop giving the form to volunteers because they didn't want to offend anyone.

Despite the form, at least 30 people will be modeling in the anti-fashion show this year and diversity still plays a big part. An important aspect of the show is combating traditional media images.

"People who would never be asked to model are the people I'm interested in," Eriksen said.

Eriksen has a model who's in a wheelchair because she wants to bring attention to the fact that designing clothes for people in wheelchairs is very different. For example, the position of pockets on most pants is impractical for someone in a wheelchair.

Groovefest is the biggest event that the Women's Centre puts together each year. The last three shows have sold out and co-ordinators expect the same for this year. The money raised from Groovefest will go to various local organizations such as UVic Pride, the Native Sexual Assault Centre and the Women's Centre.

Tickets are available at Vertigo, the UVSS Info Booth and Lyle's.

Barebacking still a heated topic of debate

Self-Portrait by David Low

BY DAVID LOW

Before AIDS, the homo-vernacular had no special name for fucking without a condom because there was no need for it. Today it's called barebacking and this topic is the subject of heated debate in the queer press. The Alberta-based *Outlooks* devotes a full-page to the subject in this month's issue, while Vancouver's *X-tra West* recently published a letter that described barebacking as representing rebellion, freedom and chance. The many concerns around this activity are further complicated by the new popularity of pre-condom gay pornos that are now promoted as barebacking videos. Even the word itself is scrutinized for a clear definition.

Stacy Leblanc, co-ordinator of communications for AIDS Vancouver Island, discussed the struggle for clarification.

"It's complex and needs to be looked at in the full context of a variety of issues in people's lives. There is something homophobic about the term barebacking as there is no comparable heterosexual term."

But porn is about fantasy and condoms shout danger... And in porn, the condom doesn't break, everyone is perfect and nobody gets AIDS.

"But what's to clarify?" stated my friend Marc, who admits to not using condoms with about half his sexual encounters. "It feels good, maybe even better, and I always ask about the sex history of the guy I'm going to screw. But," he admitted, "people do lie." He says he never ejaculates into his fuck buddies and gets tested for HIV every six months. As well, Marc also feels that condom use was never as prevalent as most people believed.

In its 30 year history, gay porn has constantly evolved. Beginning in the late 70s, director Joe Gage tried in his porno epic *L.A. Tool and Die* to depict and define both gay life and gay sex. By the time of William Higgin's 1983 *Sailor in the Wild*, however, sex acts were used to string together a story line. Around the late 80s two major changes occurred: porn was shot directly on video, creating a colder, sharper look and, because of the demands of the actors, a gradual acknowledgment of AIDS occurred. But the transition was difficult, in the 1988 Falcon Studio's *In Your Wildest Dreams*, butch top Chad Douglas squirts spermicide in blonde twinkie Kevin Williams' bottom before the aggressive fucking, sans condom, begins. In the otherwise boring 1991 *Secret Boys Club* (about a roller-skating homosexual fraternity holding a pledge night at the rink) there are scenes of porno actors clumsily opening condom packages and fumbling to put them on. By the early 90s putting on the condom was edited out and gay porn became mainly cold and formulaic. Perhaps it was the very coldness of those videos that created a nostalgia for bareback-ing that precipitated the activity.

But porn is about fantasy and condoms shout danger. In porn nobody looses an erection, or accidentally shits while being fucked. And in porn, the condom doesn't break, everyone is perfect and nobody gets AIDS.

Both AIDS and porno have had an undeniable impact on the lives and sexual habits of gay men. While many came to practise safer sex as an act of survival and self-esteem, it is just as likely that nostalgia and a sense of danger are influencing factors to bareback.

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Project and Committee Reports
Other Business
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Expanding the sporting realm: beyond figure skating

BY HEATHER HARRISON

Picture it: Ru Paul decked out in football gear, clutching ball, barrelling towards the end zone with broad shoulders, fire in her eyes and a twinge of pain in her right heel. "Ohhh sister, you forgot to take off your pumps. And they're pink girrrrrl, they don't even go with your outfit!"

Let's face it, in "greater society" the words queer and sport are far from being synonymous, particularly in a male context. The very words "queer sport" seem like an oxymoron. "Fag" doesn't exactly bring to mind the picture of a toothless NHL player or tattooed NBA star sporting a tutu on his off days, (now does it?)

(Nope). In fact, the recently outed Olympic gold medalist swimmer Mark Tewksbury, with all his flagrant hand movements and "diva drone," is really more along the lines of what one envisions when forced to admit the existence of homosexual athletes.

He's got just enough Kellogg's appeal to bypass severe public ridicule (although I'm sure he'd beg to differ). He seems to pose little threat to the manhood of the possibly homophobic athletes around him as he competes in his solo lane divided by buoyant "gay cootie blockers." More importantly, he "came out" after he had retired from his sport.

Well that's wonderful, in that "grandma's chicken soup" sorta wonderful – so the world knows there are, along with Mark, a handful of gay athletes out there. Whoopdee doo.

The problem is the existence of the Marks and Martinas of the world hardly penetrates the thick biceps and brains of the vehemently denying population of "true jocks." Very few rugby or football players would admit the potential existence of gay teammates – unless we're talking about a female team, where all the members are lesbians. I'm being sarcastic, but the point is these two streams of thought stem from the same lake of disillusion.

The reality is that not all gay male athletes are figure skaters and not all lesbian athletes are hockey players.

the queer reality

The truth? Hold on to your jock straps... we are everywhere, in every sport and on every team. Queer existence has evolved and all is well – okay, maybe not. So if all these girlie boys and dykasauras rexes are playing sports everywhere, then the same should apply here at my university, York. I am aware we have a plethora of varsity athletes walking around. I know because I see them everywhere wearing those cheesy grey and red York sweaters (mine of course is in the closet).

So surely we must have a small population of queers. "Where are they?" you may ask. A more important factor is how their "nonposition" is a big part of the construct supporting the oldest existing institution and practice of antiquity – yes, sport itself.

Though we, the gay contingents, like our hetero counterparts, snarl in the face of opponents and jump at the chance to shed blood and sweat for our sport, we simultaneously harbour a secret fear of dispraise and segregation from our teammates.

Hence, we find a nearly invisible blending of queers in sports. And we are good at it, aren't we? Not even the trained eye of the chronically heterosexually acculturated athlete can detect our presence. We are complacent in our position, we don't rock, tear up the court or foul the field. We are happy just to be there, secretly infiltrating the forbidden territory.

the queer truth

The truth is we are in the ultimate bout. We are fighting the endless internalization of gender roles. As one of my profs said, "It's not the men who are the problem, but the ideas of males and of masculinity that defines all other categories by default." But forget the academia and give me the goods. Basically, if you are a real man (i.e. woman-loving, domineering, rough, tough, crotch-scratching, spitting, etc.) you play sports. If you do not fit into this prescribed position, then you must be a woman and real women do not play sports. Granted this is the old-school view.

But we live in the new millennium, no one thinks like that anymore! Yet you can still see remnants of these beliefs in today's society, most obviously in sport.

By sheer acceptance of a submissive role to another male (which apparently is the threatening part of being homosexual), a gay man is tagged with the label of being girlie and therefore unworthy of competing athletically with real men.

On the flip side, female athletes are shafted by being considered manly and therefore are assumed lesbian because all lesbians supposedly fit the above description. The end result is that straight men win and everyone else loses.

So what's to be done? Well, I'm no gay guru but since I presently hold the title for best-known gay athlete at York (by all means if you have a contender for the title let me know), I will forward my opinion.

The constructs of masculinity and femininity need to be broken down. I'm sure it's not something you haven't heard a million times before from profs. But how do our gay athletic contingents do that? That's the hard part, but we laugh in the face of adversity, we marvel at the opportunity for challenge – we also quiver at the thought of eternal damnation.

We need to be seen and heard and prove faggy ballerina and dykey base-baller theories wrong.

Out and World Cup race-winning mountain biker Missy "Missile" Giove takes on a hill.

photo provided

Regardless, gay and lesbian athletes need to come to the surface and prove their existence in all sporting activities. We need a louder voice, plain and simple.

It is hard to change mass ideology in a skeptical, scientific world without evidence. We need to be seen and heard and prove faggy ballerina and dykey base-baller theories wrong. These finely stipulated categories created at least a hundred years ago are, to put it mildly, incorrect.

What can we really do at a Canadian universities? I challenge the members of all Canadian university teams, their coaches, therapists, managers, right through to the administration to declare themselves, their playing fields and their places of social gathering as queer positive.

I challenge varsity programs in all Canadian universities to become prevalently gay-conscious. The way I see it, if the York football team can win a huge game against the University of Toronto, there is nothing sports can't handle.

– *The Excalibur*, York University

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A history of the Gay Games

Outside the Amsterdam Arena at the 1998 Gay Games.

photo provided

BY DENA VANDALFSEN

Gay Games IV in New York in 1994 was the largest sporting event in the world. Bigger than any of the Olympic Games. Since their introduction in 1982, the Games have grown in size and at the 1998 Games in Amsterdam 14,000 queer athletes marched into the Amsterdam Arena, amid 40,000 spectators.

In June of 1981, Dr. Tom Waddell, a 1968 U.S. Olympic decathlete founded the San Francisco Arts and Athletics (SFAA), to undertake the creation and production of the first "Gay Olympic Games."

The games would have no minimum ability for participation, and the goal of the games was achieving one's personal best. Men and women were to compete on an equal basis and nationalism was not to be stressed because it was seen as a disunifying spirit within events like the Olympics. Another element of the Gay Games was the inclusion of complemetary cultural events like concerts, conferences, parades and exhibits for a very well-rounded atmosphere.

In August of 1982, three weeks before the opening of the first games, the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) obtained a temporary restraining order barring the SFAA from using the name "Gay Olympic Games." Organizers had to scramble to remove the word "Olympic" from all advertising, marketing and the printed page. Interestingly, the USOC did not bar the Special Olympics, Police Olympics, Nude Olympics or Dog Olympics, from using the same word. The SFAA removed the word "Olympic" and they were called the Gay Games. The SFAA appealed the decision, and after battling in court, the US Supreme Court decided 5-4 in favour of the USOC in March of 1987.

In September of 1982 the SFAA presented the first Gay Games in San Francisco. The event saw 1,350 athletes participating in 11 different sports, and all with a budget of $125,000 US.

San Francisco played host to the Gay Games II in August of 1986. The event had grown to 3,500 athletes and 17 different sports.

The founder and friend of the Gay Games, Dr. Tom Waddell died of AIDS on July 11, 1987.

The SFAA disbanded in July 1989 and was replaced by the Federation of the Gay Games (FGG). The FGG is dedicated to promoting and protecting the ideals the Gay Games had established under Waddell.

Vancouver hosted Gay Games III in 1990. Old Expo sites were used for the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as some events. Athletes were allowed free use of public transport and thousands of local people donated their time to the Games. This was the largest volunteer effort in Vancouver's history. It was in Vancouver that the Gay Games became a world class event.

In June 1994, Gay Games IV were held in New York City to coincide with the anniversary of the Stonewall Riots of 1969. The Stonewall event is seen by many as the beginning of the Gay Liberation movement in America.

The New York event also introduced another legal hurdle to the history of the Games. The FGG co-presidents wrote to then US President George Bush to overturn immigration policy barring individuals with the HIV virus from entering the US. In March of 1994, US Attorney General Janet Reno signed a blanket waiver allowing infected athletes into the US to participate in the 1994 Gay Games without requiring special visas.

The fifth Gay Games, Amsterdam 1998, marked the first time the games were held outside North America.

Sydney, Australia will host Gay Games VI in 2002 with the slogan, "Under New Skies."

Sports Call

BY DENA VANDALFSEN

I come from a small town where homophobia and heterocentric attitudes still run rampant. Insults like fag, fudge packer and sissy, can still be heard in classrooms and corridors. Calling the guys on the hockey team 'girls' is just seen as a way to get them riled up and off their asses.

As far as coaches, parents and many students are concerned, gay or lesbian athletes do not exist on the high school sports teams or on the hockey teams. Fags couldn't play hockey even if they wanted to.

When I returned back home for the summer, the rumour mill was buzzing with the news that two guys who had graduated recently had come out. Both of these guys had been involved in sports. Hockey, rugby, basketball and baseball. They both were athletic, smart and well-liked in the community. Their parents didn't know they were gay, neither did their coaches or friends.

Both of these guys moved away to go to school, came to terms with their sexuality and came back to shock the people at home.

This is happening all over the world, in every community and at all sporting levels.

I went on the Internet to research an article and I was surprised and overwhelmed by the information I found. I didn't realize how many different gay and lesbian sports leagues there are. In the large cities across Canada and the United States there are leagues for everything from basketball and hockey to bowling and curling.

Controversy erupted in 1995 when CBS golf analyst, Ben Wright, was quoted in a Delaware newspaper as saying, "Let's face facts here. Lesbians in the sport hurt women's golf." CBS pulled Wright off the broadcast at the Ladies Professional Golf Association championship in Wilmington. It is this sort of naming of queer people which perpetuates the fear, ignorance and bigotry that is the problem. Progress is being made, and in time, society will not see the sexuality of athletes as controversial or newsworthy, but rather focus on their ability as athletes.

It's a sensitive topic and many high-profile athletes and coaches will deny it, but the sports world is one of the last bastions of heterosexism.

Out Elite Athletes

Tom Waddell, Olympic Decathlon
David Kopay, Football
Martina Navratilova, Tennis
Mark Tewksbury, Olympic Swimming
Rudy Galindo, Figure Skating
Glenn Burke, Baseball
Bruce Hayes, Olympic Swimming
Betty Baxter, Olympic Volleyball
Geert Blanchart, Olympic Speed Skating
Scott Cranham, Diving
Muffin Devlin-Spencer, Golf
Justin Fashanu, Soccer
Ed Gallagher, College Football
Missy "Missile" Giove, Mountain Biking
Matthew Hall, Figure Skating (Canada)
Mark Leduc, Olympic Boxing
Greg Louganis, Olympic Diving
Mariah Burton Nelson, Basketball
Bob Paris, Body Building
Ian Roberts, Rugby
Roy Simmons, Football
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Brian Marshall, Olympic High Jump
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Monster Erg is all the rage

Action from the 1999 Monster Erg in McKinnon Gym.
Martlet photo by Rachel Kiers

BY HOLLAND GIDNEY

On one side of the McKinnon Gym Olympic silver medalist Derek Porter is quietly warming up listening to his walkman, while on the other side of the gymnasium a large crowd is going crazy cheering on the first heat of Senior A women.

This is Monster Erg: it's loud, it's noisy, it's indoor rowing turned spectator sport.

An annual event and the only qualifier event in Western Canada for the Indoor World Championships in Boston, this year's ergometer regatta held Sunday, Feb. 6, once again attracted everyone from novice rowers to athletes training for the Olympics, including a large contingent of UVic rowers. In total, 515 competitors went head-to-head over 2000 metres.

With 20 ergs all in a row, television screens tracking race progress and bleachers full of screaming fans, this year's Monster Erg was definitely spectator-friendly. Heats ran every 15 minutes with as many as 20 athletes competing at the same time and races flew by quickly as most competitors took only six to eight minutes to finish 2000 m.

"It's a pure, pure power event," commented Howie Campbell, one of the event organizers and head coach of the UVic men's rowing team. He said the UVic crew has been doing endurance training in 90-minute sessions, which is quite a contrast compared to quick sprint racing on the erg.

"It's kind of an anomaly," he said. "It's a 2000 m event right in the middle of long-distance training. But it's like in running, if you run the 1500 m, you don't just do 1500 m races. You do a lot of roadwork – miles and miles and miles."

On Sunday though, it appeared the training the Vikes have been doing certainly paid off.

It's interesting to compare times from year to year. Some UVic rowers had personal bests, some improved by five or six seconds from last year's Monster Erg.

UVic's top performance was turned in by Rachelle de Jong who won the Senior B (under-23 years-old) women's event in a time of 7:00.3. Though she just missed breaking seven minutes, her time was well ahead of UVic teammate Jamie Garrett (7:14.8) who finished in second and third-place Diane Wilson (7:14.9) from the University of British Columbia. In the men's Senior B event, Adam Gant won in a time of 6:06.5 but UVic's David Kay finished a very close second with his time of 6:07.

"It was a really strong race for him," said Campbell. "His time was better than some of the national team times."

While Kay had to settle for second, the UVic men's team did however turn in a first-place performance in the men's Senior B lightweight (under 165 lbs.) event. Jon Mandick cleaned up with his time of 6:34.6 while fellow UVic rower John Sasi took second in 6:53.9.

Campbell seemed happy with UVic's performance.

"It's interesting to compare times from year to year," he said. "Some of the rowers had personal bests, some improved by five or six seconds from last year's [Monster] Erg."

While UVic turned in some fine performances in the Senior B categories, it was the national team that dominated the Senior A (over-23 years-old) events.

This year's Monster Erg was once again held simultaneously with the Canadian Indoor Rowing Championships in Toronto and the top times in Canada in each event were named national champions. The Victoria-location winners in all four Senior A categories – Weston, Porter, Duncan and Hassett – claimed this additional honour, as well as UVic's de Jong who turned in the top time in Canada in the women's Senior B event.

The UVic women also continued their dominance of Canadian university rowing by claiming their third-straight national indoor university women's fours title as de Jong, Jamie Garrett, Karen Clark and Bonnie Fiala combined for the win. The men's title went to UBC.

While Derek Porter didn't set a new world record in his event, 72 year-old Ruth Doell of Half Moon Bay, California did in hers. Doell bettered her own world record in the women's 70-75 year-old category by over four seconds with her time of 8:42.2. Not bad at 72.

America's Cup: past and present

BY DIANNA KUHR

At this very moment, there are some very wealthy American business people cringing at the thought of what occurred in Hauraki Gulf, New Zealand last weekend. This year marks the first time in 149 years that an American boat will not be racing for the coveted America's Cup.

The world's best sailors, backed by the world's largest wallets, have been racing in the Gulf for the past month for the privilege to take part in what has been called "the international holy grail of sailing."

Until last Sunday it was undecided who would challenge New Zealand, the current champions, for the coveted trophy. That all changed when the Italian vessel "Luna Rossa," crossed the line 49 seconds before America's best hope, "America One." This gave the Italians the decisive win in the final set of nine races.

Paul Cayard, the skipper of America One, says the US entered "too many" vessels – having five or six teams from America was not the way to put their best foot forward.

Canada, on the other hand, has not challenged for the cup since the 1970s. Canada has only raced four times since its first attempt on the "Countess of Dufferin" in 1876.

Scott Dewis, a Victoria soling racer, believes lack of funding is the main reason for so few Canadian challenges.

"Our industry in Canada isn't big enough to support large-scale sporting efforts like sailing and the America's Cup," said Dewis.

He added that a Canadian team tried and failed to raise money in Sydney to race a Canadian vessel for this year's cup. It takes a startling $30 million to race for the cup.

"They only raised $11 million," Dewis said. "And all that money came from outside of Canada."

Cayard says the fact that the Italian team was fully funded from the start, allowing them to begin practicing two and a half years early, "made a big difference."

The America's Cup race officially began in 1850 when famed British Yachters received a slightly arrogant letter from the Stevens brothers, John and William. The brothers expressed their wish to challenge the British bravado. Since then the race has always been flagged with controversy.

Over the years, the race has outlived alterations in everything from basic boating attire – they used to wear suits and ties – to changes in boat design regulations that once allowed the US to race a 65-foot catamaran, an obvious advantage over any sloop-rigged competitor.

If you are interested to see who actually wins the America Cup trophy the race between New Zealand and Italy takes place on Feb. 19.

The Martlet would like to thank the *Times Colonist*, the University of Victoria Athletics and Recreational Services and the University of Victoria Students' Society for generously helping Martlet staff attend the 62nd National Journalism Summit

Canadian University Press

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student voice

1% radical 99% apathetic

BY DAVID KATZ

Where were you on Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2000? The university supposedly closed and with academic amnesty granted by the senate, many students were simply at home, sleeping in. Others took the day to do things otherwise made impossible by a busy course schedule.

A small number of UVic students spent the morning hours standing in the middle of roads leading to campus, replete with beer keg and couch barricades, and protested funding cuts to universities. This group of some 200 people, joined by ex-students, high school students and whoever else wanted to come to campus for a few hours to show support, did manage to turn away most of the cars trying to enter campus, according to Saanich Police Const. Price. But did they manage to make their point?

They certainly were armed with a poignant issue, one that affects every single one of us on campus, whether we slept in or walked a picket line. As some of the protesters' placards stated, education truly is an investment in the future.

Yet despite the importance of the issue, the Access 2000 campaign managed to attract only 1158 "Yes" votes in support of the strike, and 1410 votes in support of restoring $3.7 billion in transfer payments to provinces for post-secondary education in the 2000-2001 federal budget.

These vote statistics, though presented in the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) informational pamphlets as an overwhelming percentage of the vote – 76 per cent to strike and 92 per cent to restore funding – in fact represent about 7 per cent of the UVic student population. Of those who voted to strike, only about one-fifth managed to get to campus before the pickets came down at 11:30 a.m. In other words, approximately one per cent of the student population protested funding cuts to higher education. Overwhelming? It sure did not look it.

The reality was that people were not convinced by the CFS rhetoric. Propagandistic and misleading magazines and leaflets failed to quote sources, misrepresented statistics and the UVic Senate, and beat the activist drum while giving little substance to alternatives. The supposed "Affordable Solution" outlined on the CFS web site, namely to grant a $3.7 billion infusion to university funding, eliminate tuition and give students grants instead of loans from which to live, has failed to find a passionate following amongst the majority of students. Polarizing and aggressive slogans such as "They Stole 7 Billion. Make Them Give it Back" blanketed campus, provided an eye sore in the Student Union Building (SUB), violated posting rules, but failed to capture an educated and intelligent imagination.

Distancing the average student yet further from the cause, the protesters who picketed campus for three hours in the morning chose not to present an informational picket as promised, but instead blockaded entrances to campus with couches, beer kegs and tires. There is no telling how this image will appear in the living rooms of Greater Victoria, but it has certainly angered the university and turned away protesters who were unwilling to get radical.

The tactics used by University of Victoria Students' Society (UVSS) and CFS have unfortunately degraded an issue that is of critical importance. Those who might have supported a campaign with real solutions grounded in reality may have offered more support. CUPE unions, the university administrators and professors should have been actively included. There is no "us vs. them." We are all in this together.

Instead, the Access 2000 pamphlets and newspaper demonstrated that the organizers of the strike misrepresent reality as readily as "the media." The lack of support in the polls and the pickets show them to be as out of touch with their constituents as the politicians who thoughtlessly introduced a wage increase at the most inopportune of times.

Criticism of the strike does not, however, excuse students who just did not bother to show up. At least the picketers cared enough about the issue to get out of bed and stand in the cold. We should all recognize that a strong education system is critical to Canada's success. Whatever our opinion on this issue might be, removing ourselves from the debate is an irresponsible act from members of a democracy. As post-secondary students, we are supposed to be this country's next leaders. It is dangerous to leave that job in someone else's hands simply because we cannot bother to be heard.

Consider that on Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2000, we were represented by about one per cent of our student population, people who stood in front of cars, waved placards and blockaded roads with beer kegs and couches. If we stay in bed, then that is the kind of representation we are likely to continue to get. And we will only have ourselves to blame.

Summer McFadyen, UVSS director of finance, discussing Access 2000 on the picket line on Feb. 2.

Martlet photo by Jeremy Miller

soap box

To those who crossed the line

BY KATHRYN SAUNDERS

I am a defender of the picket line. I firmly believe that picket lines should inconvenience those in power and not cater to their whims. To ask permission from those in power to hold a protest defeats the purpose. I understand that some of the university community is angered that they were not prepared for the actions that students took to shut down the campus on Feb. 2. I'm glad to hear that people were unprepared. This strike should have inconvenienced you. What were you doing crossing a picket line anyway? That is truly deplorable. By crossing a picket line, "legally" sanctioned or not, you are aligning yourself with those in power.

For those of you who said I support you but I can't afford to miss my class: It must be nice. I can't afford my education. I am appalled that here in Canada we have grown complacent in the idea that education is for the privileged few. Tuition costs are exorbitant and students are growing deeper and deeper into debt. For those of you whose education was paid for by someone else and so you don't feel that this struggle is yours, suit yourself. But be warned, we're going to take you down.

For those of you (and many of you told me this) who believe that a free education will mean that your degree will not be valued: I ask you, why are you threatened by an educated population? Do you think if you educate everyone then your job, class and lifestyle will be threatened? Maybe it should be. The quality of your education should not depend on the price you pay for it. This is an elitist idea and helps to propagate oppression. By defending a costly education you are defending the proliferation of a system which benefits the very few at the expense of the many.

I understand that the university is upset that the students on the lines did not abide by the "pre-arranged" plan on how to picket. I am very relieved to hear this. If the university admin is pissed then we may have done a good thing on Wednesday. The mistake of the organizers was to have made an agreement with the university at all. We should not be asking permission to protest an unjust system. We should be calling strikes every week not every three years. If everyone refused to attend classes until our education was open and accessible to our demands would be met fast and without all the political ass-kissing that has occurred over the years. We should be trying to piss off the politicians because so far petitions and protests really haven't done too much. (Yes I know about the tuition freeze – great but not enough).

Those in power are not going to listen to us if we obey their rules of communication. They created those rules so that our complaints could disappear into the bureaucratic nightmare of government. If you want change, then make change. The rules only exist for those in power. Think for yourselves. Make your own rules.

If your degree only holds meaning to you because others don't have one then continue to cross picket lines and think nothing of those whose livelihood you are crushing by your apathy. If you don't take a side then you are siding with those in power.

valternative
groove fest
anti-fashion show
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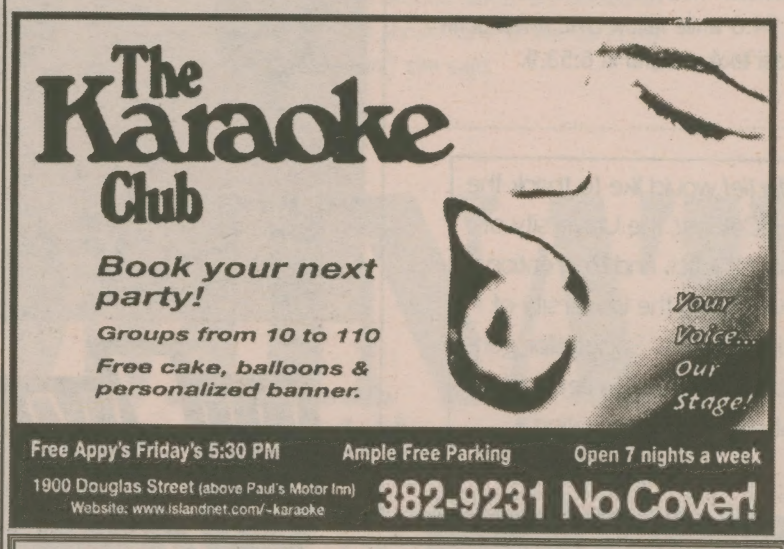
february 12 @ vertigo
tickets: $8 advance / $10 door
available at lyle's place, the sub, and the women's centre
sponsored by cfuv, the martlet, on the fringe, uvic pride, uvss women's centre, and vertigo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on-campus

The Circle K club meets **every Wednesday**, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. in CLE C112. Come out and join us. Low commitment & volunteer projects. For more info contact rvcolson@uvic.ca

The Economics Course Union is having a social on **February 10 at 6:30 p.m.** in the Grad Lounge. This is a great chance for economic students and faculty to meet! For more info e-mail erick@uvic.ca

Butt-ugly tomatoes. Heirloom seedlings. Contact Lisa, campus community gardens @ kadonaga@uvic.ca

Accepting submissions for the UN Week for the Elimination of Discrimination art show. Deadline is **March 15, 2000.** Call 721-8486, e-mail equis@uvic.ca or visit our website at http://web.uvic.ca/equity for submission guidelines.

off-campus

Reading break Effective Cycling courses available. CanBike II Effective Cycling: **February 19 and 21-23**, 2000. CanBike Effective Cycling Instructor's Upgrade **February 26 and 27**. The UVic Bicycle Users Committee recommends these courses offered by CanBike instructor Ray Hall. For more information, see the Coming Events section at web.uvic.ca/uvbikes or phone Ray at 380-0172.

Diotima Philosophy Society. Explore diverse philosophical orientations, Western and Eastern. Improve thinking, awareness, and mediating skills. All levels. **Mondays 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.** Room 213, 932 Balmoral. $3. 595-5097.

accommodations

2 bright, quiet, large bedrooms for rent. Upstairs, ocean views, hardwood floors. Share kitchen, living room and bathrooms. Near Gorge, 35 minutes by bus (#14) to UVic. Ideal for serious students. Females only. Int'l students welcome. $342 and $392 (master bedroom) + 1/3 util. Call 474-2244 or 812-2843.

volunteers

A volunteer publicity coordinator is needed for the Victoria School of Writing Society. This volunteer will work with the school's publicity committee. Experience is not necessary. This is an ideal opportunity for interested volunteers to learn how to run a publicity campaign. Come out and get involved in Victoria's writing community. Interested? Any questions? Call Jessica at 477-7817.

UVic Peer Helping. Volunteer with a group of students who share interests in personal growth, helping others and embracing diversity. Peer helpers are trained to provide confidential peer counseling, information and referral to drop-in clients. Interested? Come to our volunteer information sessions **February 7 - 11, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.** (Wednesday 12:30 - 1:30) in SUB B110A, or drop into the Peer Helping Office SUB B106.

announcements

Valentine's Bash – "An Evening with Friends." UVic Music Students' Society presents an evening of desserts and live music featuring the S-C String Quartet and UVic's Cuban music group, Los Habañeros. The festivities begin at 7:00 p.m. on **Sunday, February 13** at St. Aidan's Church (3703 St. Aidan St.) Proceeds go toward maintenance of the UVic music facilities. Tickets can be bought at the door for $6/person, or bring a friend and it's $10 for two.

Summer camp counselors: on-campus interviews for premier camps in Massachusetts. Positions available for talented, energetic and fun-loving students as counselors in all team sports, including roller hockey and lacrosse, all individual sports, such as tennis and golf, waterfront and pool activities and specialty activities, including art, dance, theatre, gymnastics, newspaper, rocketry and radio. Great salaries, room, board, travel and US summer work visa. **June 17 to August 16**. Enjoy a great summer that promises to be unforgettable. For more information contact www.campmkn.com or 1-800-753-9118 (for boys' camp) or www.danbee.com or 1-800-392-3752 (for girls' camp). Interviewer will be on campus **Wednesday and Thursday, March 8 and 9** from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Michéle Pujol Room in the Student Union Building. An information session will also be held Wednesday evening at 6:30 p.m.

Recovering from a breakup? You might be interested in participating in a research study that I am conducting to determine the effectiveness of a short-term journal writing program for individuals who are recovering from romantic relationship loss. For more information, please contact Jessica Altrows at 370-0345 or e-mail me with your name and telephone number at jaltrows@uvic.ca

The Fat Discussion Group for Women is a new group being run through the UVic Women's Centre. For more information, please e-mail steph_is_me@yahoo.ca or call the Women's Centre 721-8353. Note: this is not a diet or therapy group!

getaways

Cusheon Lake Resort. Salt Spring Island Getaway. **St. Valentine's,** weekends, reading-breaks, holidays. Romance, study, relax – $89/night. Call (250) 537-9629 or visit saltspring.com/cusheonlake

tutors

The Thinkery: Tutoring for English/humanities $20/hr. Excelling in the Arts. $18 (M.A. graduate, Wagner Fellow ('95), author). Proofreading, mentorial service, etc. Phone 595-8438 or fax 595-8401.

A – ffect Tutoring: Philosophy, English, education. $15/hour. Call Carlos 881-8784.

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help wanted

Get on the Fast Track. Be your own boss and set your own hours. Call now! (toll free 24 hour message) 1-877-269-7615 – Excel Canada Independent Representative.

Suite Moves (an equal opportunity employer) is looking for part-time movers to assist in a student-run moving service. Enthusiasm and flexible hours essential. Send simple resume to 982 Annie St. Victoria, B.C. V8X 3E9.

Earn $200, $300, $500 or more per week, assembling product in the comfort of your own home. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope to : O.P.H. 6-2400 Dundas St., west, suite 541 Ref 1390, Mississauga, Ont. L5K-2R8.

The end is near! You're almost out of time to reconsign at SUBtext. Last day is Feb. 28, 2000, after this date any unclaimed items become SUBtext property, so come on in!

services

Tax preparation with pick-up and delivery. Vida Samim CGA. Phone 477-4600 or 477-4601.

Secure bike lockers now available for $30 until end of spring term. Protect your valuable bike from weather, tampering, and theft. The lockers are located beside the SUB. Apply at the SUB Info Booth. More information at <web.uvic.ca/uvbikes/bikelocker.html>.

hey you!

Ryan, Ryan, Ryan!... oh damn, just a fantasy. For the reality (?) find me, the girl who sat across from you in our chem 101 lab... I sense definite chemistry between us.

Hey Football, we all want to see a keg stand Saturday night. And remember: "My name ain't baby, it's Janet. Miss Jackson if you're nasty."

Hey everybody! Party on Green Street Friday!

Hey jackass dad at the dump: try to think about what you're saying before you open your sexist/homophobic mouth. And I truly hope you don't have any girl children. Don't complain when your children grow up to be assholes.

Optimum Prime: I've loved you since I was four. Gimme a kiss? Love Kelley.

Johnny, my brain is numb.

billboard rates

students and clubs	$2/issue
non-students	$2/line
businesses	$5.50/line
hey you!	$1/issue

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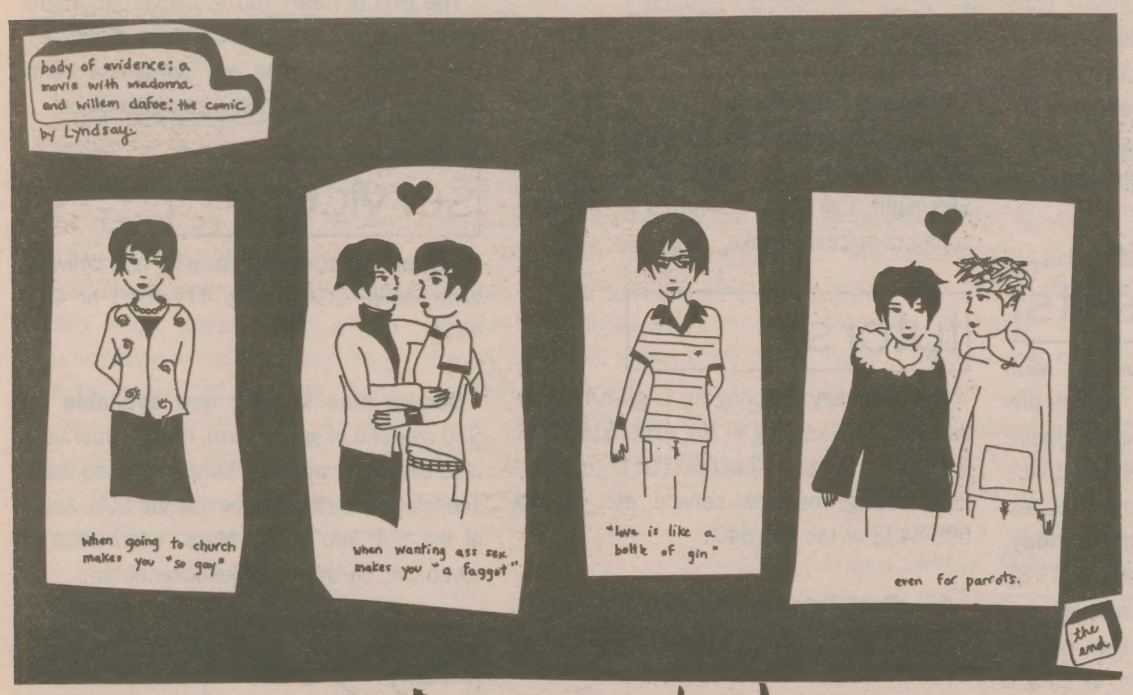
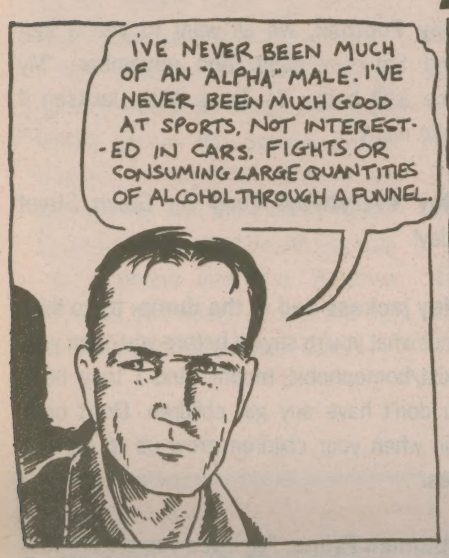
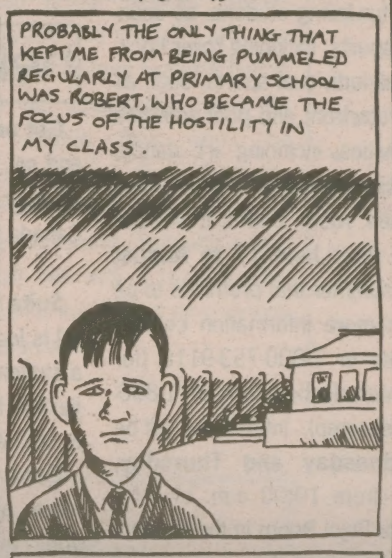

body of evidence: a movie with madonna and willem dafoe: the comic.
by Lyndsay.
when going to church makes you "so gay"
when wanting ass sex makes you "a faggot"
"love is like a bottle of gin"
even for parrots.
the end.

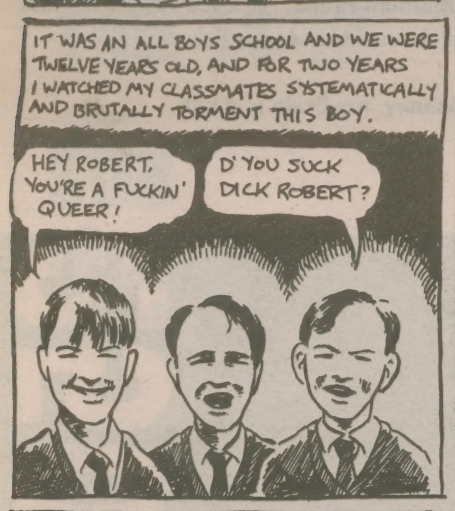
Schoolyard lessons.

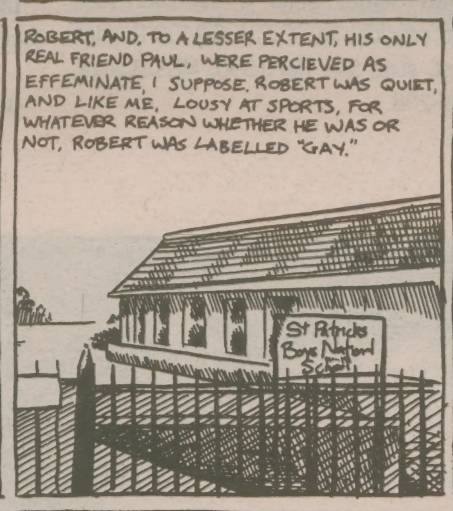
by NickO'Teen.


I'VE NEVER BEEN MUCH OF AN "ALPHA" MALE. I'VE NEVER BEEN MUCH GOOD AT SPORTS, NOT INTERESTED IN CARS, FIGHTS OR CONSUMING LARGE QUANTITIES OF ALCOHOL THROUGH A FUNNEL.

I TENDED TO BE CHOSEN LAST FOR TEAM SPORTS (OR IF I WAS LUCKY, SECOND LAST) AND ONCE, IN A FEAT OF SPECTACULAR SPORTS INCOMPETENCY, PUNCHED THE BALL INTO MY OWN GOAL WHILE PLAYING DEFENSE IN SOCCER.
NICKY, PASS TO YOU!
WHA?!!
PUNT!

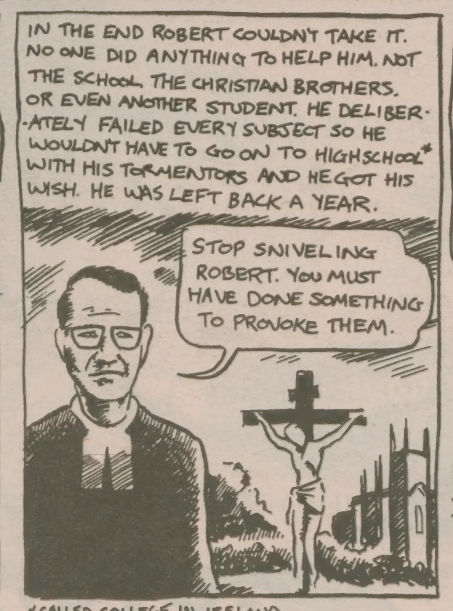

PROBABLY THE ONLY THING THAT KEPT ME FROM BEING PUMMELED REGULARLY AT PRIMARY SCHOOL WAS ROBERT, WHO BECAME THE FOCUS OF THE HOSTILITY IN MY CLASS.


IT WAS AN ALL BOYS SCHOOL AND WE WERE TWELVE YEARS OLD, AND FOR TWO YEARS I WATCHED MY CLASSMATES SYSTEMATICALLY AND BRUTALLY TORMENT THIS BOY.
HEY ROBERT. YOU'RE A FUCKIN' QUEER!
D'YOU SUCK DICK ROBERT?

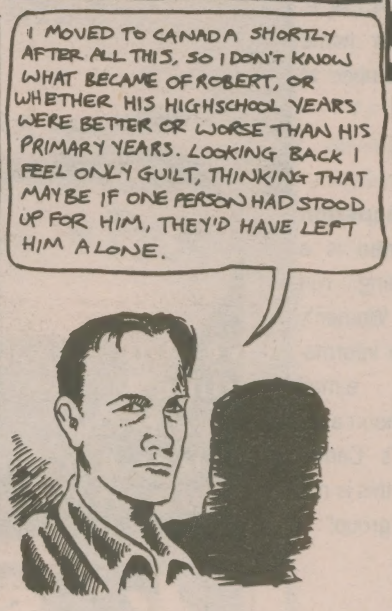

ROBERT, AND, TO A LESSER EXTENT, HIS ONLY REAL FRIEND PAUL, WERE PERCIEVED AS EFFEMINATE, I SUPPOSE. ROBERT WAS QUIET, AND LIKE ME, LOUSY AT SPORTS, FOR WHATEVER REASON WHETHER HE WAS OR NOT, ROBERT WAS LABELLED "GAY."
St Patricks Boys National School

AND FOR THIS PERCIEVED "GAYNESS" HE WAS CONSISTENTLY OSTRACISED AND ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS BEATEN UP BADLY ON THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND.
LEAVE ME ALONE.

IT SEEMS IN RETROSPECT AN ACT OF APALLING HYPOCRISY, GIVEN THAT MOST OF THE BOYS I WENT TO SCHOOL WITH HAD LIKELY DONE SOME KIND OF SAME SEX EXPERIMENTATION (IT BEING AN ALL MALE ATMOSPHERE)
ROBERT AND PAUL WERE SUCKIN' EACH OTHER BEHIND THE BIKE RACK. LET'S BEAT THE SHITE OUT OF THEM.
YEAH..


IN THE END ROBERT COULDN'T TAKE IT. NO ONE DID ANYTHING TO HELP HIM. NOT THE SCHOOL, THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERS, OR EVEN ANOTHER STUDENT. HE DELIBERATELY FAILED EVERY SUBJECT SO HE WOULDN'T HAVE TO GO ON TO HIGHSCHOOL* WITH HIS TORMENTORS AND HE GOT HIS WISH. HE WAS LEFT BACK A YEAR.
STOP SNIVELING ROBERT. YOU MUST HAVE DONE SOMETHING TO PROVOKE THEM.

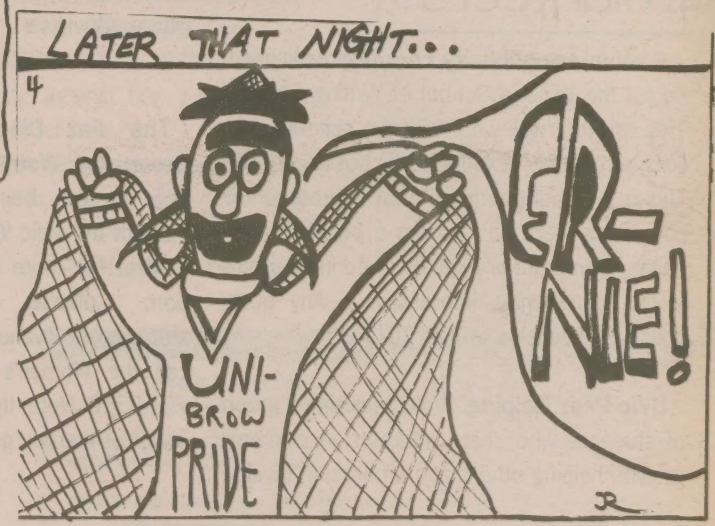
*CALLED COLLEGE IN IRELAND.


I MOVED TO CANADA SHORTLY AFTER ALL THIS, SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT BECAME OF ROBERT, OR WHETHER HIS HIGHSCHOOL YEARS WERE BETTER OR WORSE THAN HIS PRIMARY YEARS. LOOKING BACK I FEEL ONLY GUILT, THINKING THAT MAYBE IF ONE PERSON HAD STOOD UP FOR HIM, THEY'D HAVE LEFT HIM ALONE.

Sesame Street™ Secrets

BY JONATHAN "SUPERGROVER" ROTHMAN

BEFORE ERNIE MOVED IN WITH BERT, HE HAD A FALLING OUT WITH HIS DAD.
1
DAD, I'M SICK OF YOUR ANTI-ZERO, GO-FORTH-AND-MULTIPLY BREEDER BULL-SHIT!
VUN, TWO! I HATE YOU!
AH AH AH...



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